MOSE EVANS

BY

WILLIAM M. BAKER

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MOSE EVANS:

A SIMPLE STATEMENT OF THE SINGULAR FACTS OF HIS CASE.

BY

WILLIAM M. BAKER,

AUTHOR OF "INSIDE, A CHRONICLE OF SECESSION," "THE NEW TIMOTHY," ETC., ETC.

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TO

MR. W. D. HOWELLS.

MY DEAR MR. HOWELLS.

As this book was written in moments snatched from that Profession which is the chief business of my life, it has devolved—during its publication in the "Atlantic Monthly"—a degree of labor upon you as Editor, which I have all along greatly regretted.

Allow me, then, to inscribe the volume to you, in token of my sense of your unfailing courtesy,

And to remain,

Very sincerely yours,

W. M. B.

"God created man in his own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them."

"For woman is not undeveloped man,
But diverse: could we make her as the man,
Sweet love were slain, whose dearest bond is this,
Not like to like, but like in difference:
Yet in the long years liker must they grow;
The man be more of woman, she of man;
He gain in sweetness and in moral height,
Nor lose the wrestling thews that throw the world;
She mental breadth —
Till at the last she set herself to man,
Like perfect music unto noble words;
And so these twain, upon the skirts of Time,
Sit side by side, full summed in all their powers.
Then comes the statelier Eden back to men:
Then reigns the world's great bridals, chaste and calm:
Then springs the crowning race of Human kind!"

MOSE EVANS.

I.

Just where the prairie fire did fiercest sweep,
The grass grows richest, green and strong and deep!

It was most unbusiness-like in me! Yet I cannot acknowledge it to be ungentlemanly, for I had no intention of the sort. Shot enough, Heaven knows, had come from my side already; the shattered houses all around us as I spoke testified to that. My engagement to Helen Sinclair, resulting in marriage that very noon, — I recall it as I write, — itself would have prevented me.

"Allow me to say, General," that was all I did say, "it was what your royalist ancestor did in coming over from England!"

It is to old General Theodore Throop of Charleston, South Carolina, I make the miserable remark, and in Charleston almost before the cannon are cold.

But, please let it be perfectly understood, there

is to be no passing over, much less camping upon, the battle-fields of the Rebellion in these pages. I heartily agreed with Miss Sinclair that the man must be very wicked or very weak who would hinder the hand that is so surely reclothing these torn plains, and in every sense, with grass and grain. I only record my blunder and the General's reply for — reasons!

"Yes, sir!" The General flushes, as he replies, not merely over his great face; I see the glow run far back under the white hair of his forehead, to the very tips of the large hands rested on the head of his yellow cane! The heart leaves no inch of the General's portly person untinged by its exasperation. "Yes, sir! And it was by Puritan fanaticism he was driven across the Atlantic! It is the same thoroughly detestable Puritanism which has ruined me, sir, compels me, sir, in my old age, to go to even a ruder West. I tell you, sir!" — There is tremor as well as deepening color in the grand old soul, as he rises from his seat and grasps the ivory-headed cane as if it were a sword. "I tell you, sir!" —

Now, what is the use? The General was born in South Carolina. I was born, I am proud to say, in New England. It is all over, — our being born

and the war. Besides, it neither merits nor demerits anything. Moreover, here is the present and the future to be practically settled. I was a land-agent at the time. I violate no confidence when I say that I was, at that date, in charge of the extensive affairs, since very lucrative, of the Great Western Land Company, having been myself the author (a friend, "old New Hampshire," being, as you will see, the largest owner) of the whole scheme. I frankly say, as land-agent I made the acquaintance of General Theodore Throop, and our conversation took place the first day I approached him in reference to exchange of real estate. I knew — who did not know? — that the General was ruined in the ruin of Charleston by the war. As I succeeded, to our mutual advantage, in afterward showing him, he could make far more of property out West by settling it than he could ever hope for in relation to his Charleston estate.

Of course the reader has read of the magnificent mines of marl opened since the war, but lying undreamed of under the feet of the South Carolinians till then. It is like the gold and the silver, and the value in the soil, nobler still, producing such splendid fruits and crops, over which Califor-

nian aborigines and Spaniards wandered with idle steps so long. Why should I have told General Throop all my reasons for our bargain? He would have despised the marl as portion of the new and detested era.

"Ever since I came here," I remarked to my young wife, — bride, in fact, — the very evening of my first conversation with General Throop, "those old lines have been ringing in my head, —

'Oh the holy Roman Empire!
How holds it still together,' —

miserable doggerel, and where did I get it from?"

"Faust," my wife replies. "He sings it, or somebody does, in the wine-cellar."

"This Charleston suggests it less than does the General himself, who is himself Charleston. Such a steady grandeur in the General still, the inertia of two hundred years of position and power!" I go on to add.

"By the by, Henry, when and where did *you* make acquaintance with Goethe?" It is some two weeks after this that my wife asks the impertinent question, doing up or undoing down her hair for the night at the glass as she does so.

"I perfectly understand, Helen, the *you* of your question," I make placid return. "I *was* a news-

paper-boy from my sixth year; *did* black boots, even, I do believe. I told you the whole story. Somehow, here, in my stay in your South, during my little runs over Europe, I have gathered something besides money."

"You know perfectly well, Henry," — my wife faces me in a magnificent back-ground of loosened hair, — "that you are" —

"The exact opposite of General Throop. South Pole and North Pole. Old era and new. The largest good travel and reading have done me," I add, "is that I have come to see things as they exactly are!"

"You do not know how struck I was, dear," my wife said, on this occasion, after certain endearments which made it necessary to do all that wealth of hair entirely over again, "with your plans to buy up Charleston property at its lowest ebb because" —

"The lowest ebb is the turn of the tide toward flood," I add. "Yes, I possess the money-making faculty, I do believe. And I happen, also, to know that General Throop possesses, apart from money and in himself, all the deference paid only to money. There is a certain something, — a James Madison, George Washington, — something

in the man which compels from all a respect beyond" —

"That is why I loved you, Henry; not your having it, dear, your being able to see and acknowledge it in our people. But it is to please me you have made your home in Charleston; all that about business is only pretense."

But my wife was mistaken. General Throop never had reason to regret our real-estate transactions. I am living, as I write, in the former mansion of the Throops near St. Peter's Church in Charleston. I remember so well the evening I first entered this house. My conversation with the General, with which I begin these pages, was soon after my making his acquaintance. During the months after, it was long and hard work, — extremely delicate work on my part; he came not only to see the sound sense of my business suggestions, but to take a liking for me. I wonder — it flashes upon me as I write — if that was not largely because of my sincere respect and admiration for the General himself; for I can make all allowance for one who lived in a different era from myself, — more than Oliver Cromwell made, I feel sure, for Charles I. But is not this very making all allowance for other people itself a part, not the least excellent part of our *new* era?

"Can you not take tea with us, Mr. Anderson?" he said to me, at last, during the conversation wherewith this narrative begins. "Let us say on Thursday evening. Thursday? No, that is the Fast of St. Sebastian the martyr, — a matter of my wife's," the General explained, with a slight flush. "Say Friday evening?"

Now, I knew it was to the General very much as if an inhabitant of the Faubourg St. Germain had made like request of a denizen of the Faubourg St. Antoine. I was pleased at his liking me. I like the liking of any good man; so I said, "I thank you, sir, but it is not in my power." And I suppose there was a flush on my face now. "I am a married man, General, and Mrs. Anderson is with me at the hotel," I added.

"Ah, excuse me!" in return. For here was very grave matter. The General sat still in portly body before me in my office; really he was, on the instant, in his gloomy old parlor, laying the matter before his wife and daughter, and there, excusing himself almost immediately, he was in person two hours later.

"They will invite us, Henry," my wife said to me that night. "I am glad of it, because I am so tired of this solitary hotel life. I knew Agnes

Throop at school. But, especially since I married *you*, she has to approach me first; has to, if she *is* an angel. Besides, it gives you a firmer position in business. And then the Throops give admittance to — Charleston!" And if my wife kissed me once, she did several times in the course of the evening, singing her gayest songs at the piano, in the hotel parlor, no one but ourselves being in the room; dressing herself more brightly than since we came. Amazing the value women attach to certain things! If it had been ten thousand dollars cleared in a transaction, my wife could not have been more delighted.

"Because it shows I was right in loving you, Henry," she explained. "I knew General Throop would learn to know you. Did you tell him all?"

"There is nothing I am ashamed to tell him, I am sure," I began.

"Because I am almost afraid, at last," my wife said, more soberly. "You see, Henry, I know all about the Throops. There are only three of them now. Theodore, the only son, was killed by a splinter of rock in Sumter during the siege. Mrs. Throop and Agnes and — I suppose I should say — Mr. Clammeigh make up the family."

"Mr. Clammeigh! The lawyer?" I ask.

"Tall, black-haired, exceedingly neat, very composed, perfectly fitting clothes" —

"He is our legal adviser," I interrupt. "Very silent and cold; such a gentleman as you will find in the social circle of a wax-work exhibition."

"Yes; oh, of course," my wife replies, in a perplexed way. "I will tell you in a moment why I happen to know him." — It is the strangest way people have! (I make the remark here while my wife hesitates.) You cannot mention Mr. Clammeigh's name, but somehow, after a curious silence, there is somebody certain to say, "Now, you may say what you please, but *I* like Mr. Clammeigh!" in a defiant way, as if some one had attacked him. — "If he ever did anything wrong I never knew of it. But somehow" — And I saw that my wife, her hands resting upon the keys of the piano was really looking at my lawyer in the full-length portrait of the mother of Washington hanging upon the wall before her and over the instrument. "They say they were engaged before the war," she added, beginning a low-tuned tinkling upon the keys as she said it.

"Engaged to Miss Throop? How do you know anything about it? I do believe you ladies had an instinct, through the globe, of the betrothal of the Emperor of China."

"Women do not always tell everything, Henry, when it is a matter of feeling and has reference to a man — I mean to another woman. Did I ever tell you that I was at a convent school with Agnes Throop?" And my wife, as she said it, played a little louder.

"I knew that you were born and educated in South Carolina," I said. "But why?"

"Because of your birth in New England, your — and my political opinions! I said to myself, Let the Throops find out who Mrs. Anderson is if they wish to; I do not care a picayune! What a fib! Oh, I do hope, Henry, we shall be asked!" And my wife turns to me, actually crying. "I love Agnes so, and we have not spoken to each other since we left school. And now that we are married, I want you to know her, Henry."

"Now that we are married?"

"Because you would have fallen in love with her desperately, but for that!"

"What a foolish remark! I beg pardon."

"Perfectly natural. Wait till you see Agnes, and you will understand!" my wife replies. I did wait and I did understand!

"Did you observe anything when you first mentioned Mr. Clammeigh, — in me, I mean?"

my wife asked, after some long-continued tinkling upon the piano.

"Your face was from me, but I imagined at the moment you gave a little start," I said, wondering a little.

"Because," my bride replied, turning around on the screw of the music stool, seat and all, looking me full in the face, paling a little, but her steady eyes of blue in mine, — "because I once supposed I was to — would — Henry, Mr. Clammeigh and myself were once engaged to be married!"

I rather think the pain was greater than the surprise on my part, and she saw it in my eyes.

"You remember, Henry, I told you of the fact without the name," she went steadily on, her eyes never leaving mine. "I was very young, *very* young! He is not a day older now than he was then, looks exactly the same in every respect now as then, — like a corpse! No, I mean like a wax image in a show. Never mind how it began, nor how it ended. He was teaching school near my father's plantation then! I had to conceal it from my father and brother, as they would have shot — no, they had too much sense. I did love that man then. I do not love him now." No special

emphasis, but exceeding meaning in the way the words were spoken. "And I do love you, Mr. Henry Anderson, land-agent, from New England, with all my heart!" And I was perfectly satisfied, seeing, as I did, the entire woman in those loving eyes.

"It will be no barrier to our associating with them," my wife said half an hour afterward. "Mr. Clammeigh will know me. I know him. Agnes Throop will not be disturbed by me in the version of the matter her betrothed will hasten to give her. He is an admirable lawyer, — not before a jury, but for office-work, — which is all you care about in him; but it is strange. And," my wife added, with clouded eyes, "the strangest part of all is in the future."

"How do you know, Miss Medea?" I ask.

"Wait, O Jason, and you will see!" she replies. It will sufficiently explain all this to say that we were together in Paris before our marriage and saw Rachel in the tragedy in question.

II.

The sturdiest Faith is born of deepest Doubt;
No Victory so complete as refluent Rout;
Blood blendeth best with blood in battle poured;
What hands so clasp as those which drop the sword?

In a week after the General's first allusion to the matter Mrs. Throop and their daughter made the formal call; after due return of which we *did* take tea with General Throop and his household.

"They thoroughly like you, Henry," my wife said to me after both events. "General Throop knows a genuine gentleman when he sees him, and by the instinct of a gentleman. Agnes and myself were, in an instant, as if we had parted only yesterday at the convent. And a true woman knows a true woman too. I have never met a woman — my mother died when I was an infant — to compare with Agnes Throop!"

Let me record it frankly just here: besides my dear wife, Agnes Throop is to me the woman best worth knowing of all the race. I hardly understand more of her style of beauty than I do of her

dress, material and cut; but I know there was a peculiar loveliness in her — which I will not mar by attempting to describe — as indescribable as is the violet-characteristic of a violet, making that flower to differ — shall we say from a dahlia? for my wife is a brunette. Mrs. General Throop is a partial explanation of her daughter.

I understood all my wife told me of *her* as we were dressing to go there to tea, in the first half an hour after we were in the old-fashioned parlor. It is down stairs, as I write, curiously carved marble mantel and all. If I live — it is Helen's suggestion — till that next anniversary, I intend to have that same mantel carefully taken down, packed, and sent. But never mind about that just now.

It was in the cool of an early autumn, and Mrs. Throop was standing beside the mantel the evening we took tea there for the first time, when General Throop introduced me. Dressed in black, jet cross upon her bosom, jet hair silvered with the gray of her sixty years here and there. Of course, if my wife had not prepared me for it, I should have been unprepared. As it was, I brought my business faculty into unconscious exercise as I often — invariably — do when dealing

with a stranger, — yourself, if you will allow me. It is experience, I suppose, but I make final decision, in the ten minutes after introduction, whether or no you are a trained swindler, or a rich ignoramus, or an insolvent ne'er-do-well, or simply what you say of yourself. So, when I met Mrs. Throop I entrenched myself rapidly, before those terrible eyes and her most peculiar manner, in that way. Whatever we were saying with our lips, what she said with those singular eyes was this: "I understand you perfectly, sir! you are a New-Englander. You were caught by business, when the war broke out, in Alabama. You hated secession more heartily every day by reason of being conscripted. You went through battles without firing your gun, holding yourself only by main force from shooting your own Confederate officers. You are heartily glad Mr. Davis was overthrown. You are speculating in land. You love money desperately because it is power. You have awful defects and" —

It was merely by way of parry, not thrust, that I crossed swords with those inexpressible eyes by saying, only with my eyes, to myself and to her: "All your life, madam, you were too rich, and thus made selfish, — yourself became your

occupation and your weariness. The long siege of Charleston and the killing of your only son has kept you at such strain of nerves in reference to yourself more than ever as that you cannot sleep at night, — how intensely wide awake during the day! And you are a ritualist. I blame your forms of religion for that no more than I do the particular street a man in delirium of fever dashes down, escaping from his chamber. Except this, obeying a purer gospel, you would have gone utterly out of and apart from yourself to the sufficient Saviour, standing away from you, but bidding you come, leaving yourself behind, to Him. All your perpetual observances are but the workings of the same unceasing introspection. By long-continued, tensely strained gaze inward upon your own soul you have grown into the second nature of your exceeding insight as to the inmost souls of others" —

I think I am a sensible, practical man. I do heartily despise mesmerism and spiritualism, but I have met Mrs. Throop! I find I have to abandon the making you understand anything about her. Her soul had so worn the body threadbare, as by perpetually grinding spirit against the flesh, that she was to you almost purely a soul, having to do

only with the soul in you too. Yes, I will stop. The reader who has met such persons will excuse my failure in describing this lady. Mr. Clammeigh was a great relief that evening. If you desire to interest a statue of Apollo in your conversation, your work is hard, — so steadily interested in all you are saying as to his eyes, so essentially uninterested in you and all your fly-like buzz as to his soul. Because I know land, know cotton, by having come pretty thoroughly to know the man who sells the same! What did I care, however, for Mr. Clammeigh's perfect propriety, accurate excellence, gentlemanly reticence? He had to do our law work to our company's satisfaction, or there were other lawyers. As to Helen? Here, too, being only a land-agent, having no facility with my pen, I cannot make you understand how perfectly we understood Mr. Clammeigh. So far as Helen or myself was concerned, he was a corpse with all of the death of a corpse, but untouched, I do assure you, by one of the tears gen erally dropped upon such!

And the reader must allow me to make an ex planation here. I said I have no literary facility. being merely a man of business. Now a friend, whose painful task has been to look over my manu

script, entreats me to correct my style, or at least "put in more verbs." I have no objection to verbs, none at all, if I but knew what verbs and where to put them! My business correspondence has not been considered uninteresting, — for the matter, however, not the manner: please accept this narrative in that way.

I am not dealing with characters, but actual persons. I know I should let them live for themselves on these pages instead of trying to portray them, but neither Mrs. Throop nor Mr. Clammeigh express themselves at all in their words; you had to know them in person. Therefore I have a dozen times given up all idea of attempting to make this narration. But how can I help myself? The whole affair is, in certain senses, the most remarkable of my life; it will cease to press upon me when I have fairly written it out, — that is, as well as I can.

"Did you observe our meeting?" my wife asked me afterward.

"No, I completely forgot about all that," I said. "I was in the custody, at the moment, of Mrs. Throop."

"We were both perfectly prepared for it, of course!" my wife said. "I merely remarked,

when introduced, 'We have met before, I believe.' I thought his steady pallor turned a shade of yellow at first, I don't know. It is amazing how keenly people can live and afterward utterly die; it almost shakes my belief in the immortality of the soul," my wife added.

"His soul seems, at least, to have withdrawn itself from the surface," I said. "The hand of a dead man has as little warmth and pressure. I dare say you have prejudiced me. The man has come to hide himself very perfectly in himself, but it may be mere timidity; a rabbit burrows as deeply in its hole from fright as a robber in his cave for ambush."

"Did you notice Agnes Throop?" my wife asks.

"How could I help it? At least after I passed from Mrs. Throop to the mere bodily presence of her husband. She is more frail and more beautiful than I had expected."

"But it was touching!" my wife continues. "I did not need that special tenderness in her eyes and her kiss at meeting and parting, to see that Mr. Clammeigh had told her everything. I was more vexed and touched than I can say! It was so at the convent," my wife continues, after long thought. "The girl bewitched those pallid old

nuns; they crossed themselves and petted and almost dreaded her. An unaccountable fascination of manner? eyes? — what is it?"

"Magnetism," I make reply, for I have not for nothing heard so many lectures in Boston. "Excess of electricity. She has instant, ready, amazing sympathy for almost every person she meets. She is giving her soul away all the time. And she requires and has everybody else's soul back in return. If she was to spend an evening in one of those five-acre parlors at Saratoga, every one of the five hundred who were thrown with her would say, — every man, child, even woman of them would say, — 'What a charming woman!' I would say myself that only love like hers could melt that man Clammeigh. Ah, how she loves him!"

"I wonder, wonder, wonder," my wife said, dreamily, and explained by adding, "Oh, never mind!"

"Mrs. Throop," I say, as much to myself as to my wife, "is what the French call — I know my pronunciation is wrong — a *femme exaltée*. Madame Roland in politics, Madame Krüdener in religion, possibly Madame Guyon in the same, Charlotte Corday in vengeance. In various forms it is all Joan of Arc over and over again. I never had

exactly the same experience, — experience as to another individual I mean. She was to me as if my conscience had taken flesh and dress in her person and stood before me."

"And therefore you made so clean a breast of it at supper?" my wife asked.

"Oh, in mentioning — incidentally and very quietly, I am sure — that I was from New England; that, although you are from the South, you held through the war the same Union sentiments as myself? Yes, I think it always best to have no concealments."

"Frankness is your one weakness, dear," my wife saw fit to reply.

"I have always found it best, in society as in business, my love. It certainly places us all at our ease with each other."

"And the General and yourself are going West to look at land?"

"Yes, the daughter naturally inherits from the mother," I say, in continuance of profound philosophical thought, and postponing, with a gesture, my wife and her question, "the power of the eyes without their ferocity, the fullness of soul without its violence. It is the father in her which tempers the mother."

"You told me that General Throop realized George Washington to you for the first time in your life. And when I was so pleased, you told me that Aaron Burr" —

"A New-Englander," I interpose.

"— had said Washington was far from being the demi-god people thought."

"And," I added, "that Adams had told a friend, waving his hand, after dinner, toward a portrait of the said Father of his Country, 'that old wooden head made his fortune by holding his tongue!' A little stolid, not swift enough for Wall Street, not having instinct for money as of a rat-terrier for vermin. It was not on carrion the eagles of those days fed, if they were slow of wing. Behind the times General Throop certainly is, absurd in his exasperation at the new era, intensely prejudiced — I do believe, however," I abruptly added, "if George Washington were to rise from the dead, he would be elected president!"

I could have proved the same, had not an old and very black woman from General Throop's entered our room at this moment with a courtesy as deep as her bright-colored handkerchief head-dress was high. She brought certain patterns of millinery matters for Helen, and I wish I had let her alone.

"Well, Aunt Mary Martha Washington," I said, — for Helen had thus made her known to me, — "how do *you* like the new things, aunty?"

"They 're not the things, marster, only patterns to make 'em with," she replies, seriously, for she suspects me.

"Oh, I mean your being free and all that!" And I wish, as I say it, that I had known better.

"I don't like them at *all*, sir!" she says, with a grave gladness for the opportunity. "We were chillern of body-sarvants of General Washington. General Theodore Throop, he bought us at the break-up there. All my life I 've sat in our church, left-hand gallery. I 've heard a thousand sermons proving we was chillern of Ham, made slaves by our Heavenly Father! I am religious, sir, I hope. He permits these abolitionist fool folks and things, black and white! It 's sinful! It won't be for long" —

"Never mind, aunty!" Curious the command with which this Southern wife of mine checks her on the spot. It lay in certain inflections of voice, the heritage in the blood for generations. But the black woman knows I am a Yankee, as marked in her coldness to me as she is deferential to Helen thereafter!

III.

He knew that a New World there must be, and sailed,
The Old World forsaking, he sought it, nor failed.
But, seeking and finding — in this was his gain, —
A nobler Columbus than sailed out of Spain!

Not three weeks after this, and General Theodore Throop and myself were making together our last day's ride before reaching the lands I was endeavoring to exchange with him for his Charleston property. So far as steamer and railway could carry us on our journey we had gone. For the last week the pre-locomotive horse had been the only conveyance possible to the dense forests and miry roads far west of the Mississippi. Roads, horse, cabins, coarse food, shuck beds, people as of a stone age prior even to the taming of horses, — at all these I winced in sympathy with the aversion, greater still, of the General. Not that he intimated it by a word. A hundredth part of the annoyance then endured occurring before the war, or even now in Charleston, would have kept him an Etna in perpetual eruption. I could not but

admire, almost venerate and love, the thorough gentleman in my aged companion. A removal was essential to the support of wife and daughter. Such a trip would have been the business of Theodore the son; possibly would have been unnecessary had Theodore lived. But Theodore was now part of the dust — how wholly in vain! — of Sumter. The General rode by my side, feeble but erect, and resolved to make the best of everything, — an old soldier upon a campaign, a cavalier of Charles and Prince Rupert retreating before the Roundheads. And, riding with a Roundhead, too, the old General clothed himself in endurance as in his necessary coat of mail. Silent in regard to bodily inconvenience, the negroes swarming about us everywhere, less, with all his kindness, than the other insects in his regard; the war and its results a powder-magazine between us from which we both instinctively held back the torches of our tongues, — these things excepted, my companion is as genial as when in his parlor at home. Only somehow I am the host now in this very extensive parlor of the West, whose duty it is to entertain, — as hard a business as devolved on Virgil playing the host to Dante through Malbolge; for we rode upon a causeway through a vast swamp on either

side, every pool thereof venomous beneath its green scum with snakes and terrible with alligators, nature itself turned vicious in the vines strangling, anaconda-like, the decrepit trees, and leaping through the air upon fresh victims. Now and then the crash of a falling tree sounding through the slimy silence, decayed trunks falling, on three occasions, across our very road!

"But some ten miles more to Brownstown," I say to the General as we ride soberly along through the live-oaks craped in moss.

"Fifty, if necessary," the General adds, cheerfully, "although I *am* a little fatigued."

"And here comes some one who can tell us," I add; for during the last twenty miles we have not been so certain we are on the right road. I turn to speak to a horseman who has joined us, but am, at first, too dazzled to speak. For, instead of some rough backwoodsman, I behold a Philadelphia exquisite! The fool is young, and not bad-looking in his waxed moustache, pomaded hair, broadcloth suit, gauntleted hands, well-brushed hat a little to one side. The instant I address him I am, in imagination, at the office of a first-class hotel in the East, confronting the exceedingly cool clerk thereof. And to him am I the dusty and tired and probably

disreputable and insolvent traveler, the nuisance inevitable to his calling.

"I intended to ask about the road," I say, as soon as I can adjust myself to the occasion; "but I see you are a stranger like myself."

"Road to Brownstown nine miles." And our hotel clerk lifts his silver-handled whip to pass us, with a contemptuous cut on the flanks of his very bright bay, then consents to endure us, seeing the road is so lonely. He had not looked at my companion.

"Are you acquainted in this region, sir?" the General asks after some silence; and I observe, on the instant, that our new arrival recognizes in the General a millionaire, pecuniary or social, and modulates his entire tone and bearing. As I rein my horse in from between the two that they may ride together, I demand of myself: Culture, manner, social position, — just how do these mold the very body of a man or woman? This old General wears them like the purple of a king, bowed to as such, no man plainer in person or attire. And what amount of dress or diamonds could make this fop other than himself? Yet it does speak well for the fellow that he defers to, recognizes, unbosoms himself to the old General. We

soon have his history. He was born and has lived all his life in Brownstown. His father and family live there now. He lives there himself, a regular physician. He is back but a few months from medical lectures in Philadelphia. This whole region, sir, is a miserable wilderness, fit only for alligators and negroes. He would not stay in it an hour if he could help it. The people are disgusting savages. He avenges himself "by dosing them, sir, dosing them most deucedly!" only his language is more highly colored as he warms to the companionship. Incidentally, as cool matter of course, he refers with contempt to Christianity as an exploded superstition, a species of Buddhism lingering for a little longer, chiefly in such benighted regions, sir, as we are riding through. As we journey rather slowly, the nine miles suffice to reassure us as to the tremendous strides of science, sir; in the very foremost rank of which marches Dr. Alexis Jones, — for the honor of his name, intensely illuminated upon a cream-colored card, is also intrusted to the General, who has slowly to unbutton many wrappings to place the same in his pocket. Here a sudden turn of the road brings us upon a horse tied to a sapling a little off the edge of the highway to the left; the dismounted rider,

his saddle-bags at his feet, just turning from a huge oak as we come upon him unawares, owing to the mud which deadens the sound of our horses' hoofs. The General and myself see nothing beyond this, merely bowing as we ride by. Dr. Alexis Jones is both nearer to the person and sharper-sighted; reins up a moment, then rides on, breaking into a peal of insolent laughter.

"Would you believe it, sir," he explains to the General at last, "that fellow was standing by that tree shaving! See the lather on his face? Had hung up one of those little round looking-glasses to the bark by his knife stuck in. Was going to black his boots, brush his clothes and hair, — saw all the things lying on his saddle-bags. Put on a clean shirt, too, sure as you live!" But Dr. Jones is far more profane than can be here recorded. "You see? He is fixing up before he goes into Brownstown. Like a circus, wants to make an awn-tray! Road so lonely, never thought anybody would happen along, see?" And as our companion goes off into another fit of laughter, I recall a certain hurried movement and shamefacedness in the person surprised, who seemed from my hasty glance to be a gentleman and very young.

"And I know who it is!" Dr. Jones bursts out

a moment after, with an oath and a downward cut of his whip-hand which causes his horse to bound. "The preacher! — See the black clothes and the peculiar face?" Dr. Jones is evidently speaking of a species of being entirely distinct from, exceedingly inferior to, himself.

The way remaining before we enter Brownstown hardly suffices for even the rapid and condensed information imparted in this connection. There once had been a flourishing church in the little town. No regular minister had lived there for years, — "dying out, gentlemen, the whole thing, even here as everywhere!" Terribly fallen the membership had become; horse-racing, gambling, hunting on Sundays but varieties of the apostasy into which the brotherhood had fallen, the very officers of the church participants of the same. "There is old Squire Robinson, very pillar of the ex-church, worst of all. Nice time this preacher will have there! You see, that will be his home while he stays, — yes, *while!*" The securing of a pastor being hardly by action of the apostate church itself, said pastor more probably sent by some Board of the denomination outside, "this young fellow shaving there" is to be the pastor of the scattered sheep.

"It will be fun alive," our friend adds, "to see how the thing will work! And the idea of his actually stopping to fix up before meeting his people, brushing up to go to Squire Robinson's!" Our friend sees a degree of amusement in the matter which we cannot appreciate until afterward.

"There 's about only one Christian — never mind the women, their weakness, poor things! — in this Brownstown that has stood it out. New Hampshire they call him, queer old soul! I suppose he came from there. Postmaster. Office, you know, in his store. Grim as death. And this, gentlemen," — unspeakable scorn in our friend as he waves his hand toward a neglected graveyard on the roadside as we enter the street of straggling cabins which constitutes the town, — "this is our Laurel Hill, our City Cemetery. Added dozens to its denizens myself since I began my practice, — practice, you observe, *practice!* And this," halting his restless horse as we get fairly into the ragged hem, so to speak, of the village, and regarding the same with disgust beyond words, — "this is our Philadelphia! Our Continental Hotel is that long, low, double, villainous old cabin on the right, with the tumble-down

porch in front; Dick Frazier — sheriff also by profession, gambler and sot by occupation — hotel-keeper. I hope to see you again, to show you our churches, libraries, museums, galleries of art, Fairmounts, navy-yards. If you survive Dick Frazier!"

I saw that the very horse of the man was restless because laden with such an ass, glancing at me with intelligent eye which said, "Is n't he a fool? How would *you* like to carry him?" The offensiveness of the fellow being in manner more than in words.

"And here," he continued, as a man rode toward us from the village, "is a representative specimen of our lovely city, — a genuine, unadulterated Brownstownian in the original package. Hold on a moment, Evans," he added as the countryman was riding by, "allow me to make Mr. Mose Evans known to you, gentlemen! I will merely add," he continued, as the other raised his hat to us, "that Mr. Evans is" — and he spelled without pronouncing the word — "a B-o-o-r. An I-g-n-o-r-a-n-t man. In fact, my friend Mr. Evans is a f-o-o-l!" There was for a moment a perplexity upon the wholesome face of the person in question, — was it possible he could

not read? — coloring and looking sharply from the rascal to myself, followed by a glance of such good-humored but absolute contempt for Dr. Alexis Jones as he bowed to General Throop in silence and rode on, that I was sorry he had not shaken hands with me. I could have kicked the puppy as, with a wave of his hat, Dr. Jones turned down a side street and rode off; but I was busy, so to speak, in being ashamed to look the old General in the face, the aspect of the town was so particularly miserable. Yet I had told him of it before; and I recalled places up the Ashley and Cooper, not many miles from sacred Charleston even, as uninviting. But the brave old soul winced nothing at all. He was on a campaign, and rode as steadily up to the wretched old tavern as if it had been a battery!

Good climate, rich lands, navigable river rolling lazy with excess of mud in sight, — yet a more miserable town could not exist. I would cheerfully describe the scenery had there been any. My field notes, for our company, of Brown County are, "Land dead level. Sandier soil, post-oaks. Bottom lands, live-oak; soil, black, waxy, twenty feet deep, *very* rich, but will bake and crack in summer. Corduroy roads. Mud. Alligators.

Bayous full of 'cotton mouths,' *i. e.* venomous moccasin snakes. Crops, corn, splendid cotton. Register A 1."

Personally, horror and loathing of the place seized upon me; suicide even to sojourn there! Brownstown was, in fact, the very corpse of a town which had tumbled down and died in the mud in a drunken fit! It may be a singular remark to make, yet if it were not so entirely unadvisable to do so, I would like dearly, at this very juncture, to give my views as to the resurrection of the dead! I do not mean the rising of dead men from their graves unknown ages hence, save, at least, so far as the doctrine to that effect is incidentally established by another thing. Allow me to state, as clearly as I can, that the thing I refer to is the capability of their resurrection, and complete and eternal transformation in the case of persons dead and buried for years in a figurative, yet good Saxon sense of the word! I am greatly pressed for time in our real-estate transactions, could find no leisure or disposition to enter on this narrative were it not for the remarkable illustration it affords in reference just to that! See if I am not right!

IV.

The cotton fields are grander far
Than cotton factories ever are !
Our bones are frail, our sinews slack,
The grander types are farther back !

"I SUPPOSE I do have," I wrote the week of our arrival in Brownstown to my wife, "a quick sense of the ludicrous, but I could hardly keep from laughing outright that first morning at breakfast, the idea of our George Washington being so terribly bitten of vermin ! Not that he spoke of it, but I knew his experience during the night from my own. Wherein *does* the nobility of this General Throop consist, that you reject any comparison of him to Uncle Toby, say, or to Mr. Pickwick, on the instant ? The wearying journey, coarse food, miserable nights, with all the tremendous work of creating a new Carolina for himself out in these Western wilds, is enough to daunt a man thirty years younger ; and the old General has lost twenty pounds by the scales in 'old New Hampshire's store,' is pale, tremulous,

almost tottering, but uncomplaining and a perfect gentleman, — there *is* no other word; commanding, by his very aspect, the hats off the heads and the loose talk off the tongues of even the 'characters' of Brownstown! It is what Falstaff said of himself with a variation; the General is not only a gentleman himself, but the cause of gentlemanliness in others! We rode out to see the land the General is exchanging his Charleston property for the day after our arrival, three miles from Brownstown, and upon the bank of the river. We stayed all night, by the by, at the cabin, near by, of a Mrs. Evans, a red-faced virago, not worse, I dare say, than Queen Bess. The only member of her family is her grown son, Ike Evans, or Tom, or Bob, I have forgotten his name. He is our guide among these terrible woods, — a sort of mute, inglorious Milton; for you have read of the Oxford students who came upon that poet, when a boy, lying asleep in the summer woods in his yellow hair, and thought it was Pan. I will tell you more about this Romulus and his she-wolf of a mother, if I do not forget it.

"When, after riding over a few hundred acres of lands, rich as cream, we lighted off our horses and had our dinner upon a bluff of live-oaks over-

hanging the stream, I saw in his manner that he had made up his mind — the General — to close the bargain. One or two steamboats passed, as we sat, laden to the water's edge with cotton; but I think it was a remark made at breakfast by a certain Odd Archer which went even further to settle the matter. Odd is, as he himself told us, 'a jack-leg lawyer,' the wild son of a distinguished minister of Georgia, a prodigal son heartily enjoying himself among the swine, and not having the least intention of coming to himself. 'For heaven's sake, General Throop,' he said, 'establish yourself here, and give existence and tone to society!' Dirty, drunken, worthless Odd Archer! and yet, the indescribable freemasonry of gentlemen between the General and the unprincipled scamp the moment they meet! Queer people, you Southerners, Helen!"

Thus far, and a good deal more, to my wife, awaiting results in Charleston.

The fact is, the General and myself are the sensation of the year in Brownstown. He is, in gossip there which I could not help overhearing, "the distinguished General Theodore Throop of Charleston, South Carolina, here to buy and make his home among us, sir!" I am, "Oh, a Yankee,

anybody can see that; but I am told, gentlemen, a millionnaire, president of a new railroad to run through Brownstown to the Pacific! Besides, he is in company with General Theodore Throop!" I must confess I did hear a certain Job Peters reject this statement of Odd Archer, Esq., with a certain "Er-r-r-r!" like the strong purring of a contemptuous cat, ending in an unwritable "Ah-h-h, yah — yes! May be so! A dapper little sand-peep of a New-Englander!" For General Throop *is* a much larger and more imposing presence, I will admit. I did not put Peters in my letters to my wife, but *I* do not mind such things. As to his remark in continuation, — "Yes, and he has this big General from Carolina with him as protection, dars n't come by himself!" — of course, that is not worth denying. For I could not help overhearing Brownstown, as I sat writing in the back room of — I cannot see the use of writing out his real name, when every person knows it is old New Hampshire whom I refer to, postmaster, and proprietor of the one store in Brownstown, a store "bound to have" for sale everything any and every body could want, with extraordinary variety of customers, — a little weazen old man in a snuff-colored suit, small eyes that looked perfect

experience of men, large ears with very red tips; though a very mummy of a man, yet Brownstown shows well that he is industrious as a beaver, shrewd as a fox, cool as a fish, fearless as a lion.

"Old New Hampshire! Now, *that* man!" — Odd Archer, the jack-leg lawyer, explains to me during our stay, on the front porch of our hotel this cool November noon, — "Oh, you have seen him! Blue steel! Why, sir, I've seen our boys go in there during the war! You see they had no pay for a year, — Confederate money at that, — no clothes, feet on the ground, half starved. Go in his store, you see! When a fellow asked to look at a pair of boots, he always held on to one while the fellow was looking at the other. 'You let go!' fellow said to him one day, the counter between them, you see. 'Why, you can look at it just as well,' he said. Because, you see, the boys had helped themselves out of stores in every other town. 'You let go!' fellow said, aiming his revolver exactly between the old man's eyes across the counter. And he never even winked, — old New Hampshire, — holding on to the boot. Well, the fellow fired, just to scare him, missing his left ear by an inch; held on none the less; there 's the hole made by the bullet now! I saw one fellow

walk in there one Saturday, — I suppose the fellow's wife was almost naked at home, — draw his knife and hold it between his teeth while he just took up an armful of bolts of calico piled on the counter, and turn and walk out. Sir, that old man was over that counter and after him! Like a hornet. Pulled away this bolt, that bolt, another bolt, fellow walking fast as he could toward his piebald mare hitched to a tree. The fellow went home to his wife without one yard; old New Hampshire came in, piled up the calico again, ready for the next customer! A New-Englander, I know," apologetically, "but you can't scare *him!*" Although I have left out the oaths of the speaker, oaths uttered with relish and moral meaning!

You understand how and why Odd Archer, Esq., is the most purely wicked of all the men you meet when you know of his parentage, — Satan himself, because fallen forever from heaven! If there is a peculiarly disreputable thing in such a man, it is the singular ease and suddenness with which you find yourself an intimate friend in his very familiar converse with you on the part of the same, pulling you on and off like an old glove! And that disreputable scoundrel would talk about

his father, the distinguished minister, his wonderful success in pastorate and revivals, his long-suffering efforts to reclaim his prodigal. "No, sir!" he would add, "not a bit of it. I am a gone case, past praying for!" I am satisfied there is no crime known to men the fellow would not have committed with zest had it come in his way, greed of the very wickedness involved for the very wickedness' sake. Singular world, ours! Now General Throop was as pure a knight as Sir Galahad, and how there could be that perfect understanding between the two, as of born gentlemen among peasants, is a matter which puzzles me as much to-day as ever.

As to New Hampshire, the postmaster, I saw he was hardened to things as are the rocks of his own coast to winter and the wash of wild waves. Sitting in his back room, I often paused from my writing at the rickety black desk, to listen to what said wild waves were saying while the mail was being opened, before, and after; or while a heavy rain held the assembled "crowd" from going home. Socially, politically, morally, irreligiously, a viler torrent of talk, especially when Odd Archer is present, speaker, prompter, applauder, fouls no kennel on earth. Now, as I came to know, there

remains in New England no more sincerely Christian man than is this old gentleman, — the very life and soul and leader and purse afterward of the Rev. Mr. Parkinson's church; for it was the Rev. Mr. Parkinson himself, fresh from his college, whom we had come upon at his roadside toilet. I suppose the old postmaster had, by long practice, learned to abstract himself from the living mire around him morally, as Archimedes did philosophically from the storming — himself the centre of the same — of Syracuse. My theory is, he created a New England for himself, of the space behind his counter and of the small room back of the store in which I wrote, and in which he slept and had his meals; constructed a New England out of himself as he sorted letters, made entries on his journal, closed bargains, allowing all the hatred of the government, the profanity and obscenity, to dash unfelt, unheard, upon the granite coast of his weather-beaten exterior. The Puritan aroma was to him as its Cuban flavor to best cigars, as its peculiar excellence to choicest brands of wine, — the deeper and stronger in virtue of long and close keeping. He had been away from home so many years, a bewildered Rip Van Winkle he would have found himself, had he revisited

the scenes of his youth. I said to him one day, I could not help it, "My dear sir, you have come not to mind all this ridicule of religion by these reckless Brown County loafers, as natural to you from them as cards, whisky, oaths, obscenity, the crack of revolvers. Suppose you are East, and hear a perfectly polished but far deadlier assault upon your Christianity by ministers of the gospel from the pulpit on Sunday, hailed with glee as great by crowds there too. Heh? Just suppose? You *cannot* suppose? Well, I 'll say nothing about the eloquent and overwhelming disproving there, by the very Rulers of the Synagogue, of everything you hold dear. But it is a good thing you landed so long ago from your Mayflower upon this remoter West!"

Change the figure and say this postmaster flowed hither as from the molten furnace of his Hampshire home; in that case he certainly has hardened into cold steel among these molding sands! If he ever relaxes the corner of mouth, even, or of eye, it is, at least, no man that knows it. Harry Peters himself in his jolliest story is as much to him, and no more, than yonder crow cawing from the dead top of that girdled post-oak over the way, in Dick Frazier's field, near the tavern. For

Harry is the joker of all the world lying around Brownstown, — the Sir Charles Sedley, the Rev. Sydney Smith, the Grimaldi, and the Dickens of Brown County. Brown County? Harry was elected captain during the war, member of the Legislature since, simply as being the most popular man known, on account of his fun! Joking and laughing is nature to Harry, as much as digestion and sleep. A miserable merry-making it would be considered if Harry Peters was not there. The simple announcement on such occasions of "Oh, yonder comes Harry Peters!" by any one on porch or at window, sent a laugh over every face in advance. You said, the next time you met him after introduction, "Why, how are you, Harry?" and from your heart, with warm grasp of hand, as if you had known him and he you from birth in the same village. I noticed it at New Hampshire's store, that dull, dreary downpour of a fall day I was there. A duller, drearier, dirtier set than sat on nail-kegs and tobacco-boxes that hour, making the very weather dirtier, I never saw. Suddenly, some one said in joyful accents, "Hi, Harry!" And the entrance of that lame, pale-faced, stoop-shouldered, jeans-clad farmer, ex-planter, was like a blast of oxygen from a blow-pipe, every man wide awake, laughing already'

"You never drink, Harry," I heard Odd Archer say, with many an oath, "because you never need it."

"Yes, private distillery in here, large supply of best Bourbon always on hand!" replies Harry, his palm on his bosom. Nothing in the words,—mere champagne froth; not worth writing, anything he said; tone and manner and meaning all, and as impossible to define as any other magnetism. I know a powerful preacher in New York, whose hairs stand erect around his capacious head, on exactly the same principle as with the dolls having flowing locks which are insulated for that purpose; it is excess of electricity in the one case as in the other! And Harry Peters is magnetic, electric, as the torpedo-eel is, fun and laughter the special species of his fluid! Nothing foul or profane, his fun is simple force of nature, no more immoral or moral than lightning!

Rev. Mr. Parkinson having come, we have church on Sundays thereafter. When the postmaster lifted the lid of his old desk, as I sat at it in the back room, to get me letter-paper, I caught a glimpse of a little, worn, old book therein. How well I know what *you* are! I said to myself on the instant. Mainspring, disinfectant, companion, sole

and sufficient, in this island among very foul waters. Judæa, New England, heaven. All this old soul loves of past, future, present! Merely a little black book? Not a prophet or apostle, or least Mary or leper in you, but is more of a living associate to this postmaster than all Brown County can afford! I wondered if, of Sundays and of nights and of mornings before his store is opened, my friend did not succeed in making out of that dismal surrounding an actual New England for himself, this living book assisting. Wondered if he had a turkey there to himself Thanksgivings. We won't mention Antæus, if you please, strengthened by touch of his mother earth: certainly the reviving force is from quite another direction in this case. But this old soul's religion must be, if figures may be multiplied, of a right royal Tyrian dye indeed, which can strike its purple so into the very fabric of the man. If some people are right, will it not be a sad stain in him eternally? But then, you see, there *is* no Eternity! What is climate and soil at last? South Carolina, for instance, is nothing whatever, except so far as it is —General Theodore Throop! That State will yet be another individual altogether when we once get at that bed of marl there six hundred feet deep

and hundreds of miles long. Up to date Carolina is General Theodore Throop or nothing. I succeed the General in Charleston; am, I suppose, the typical South Carolinian of the future. I do wonder if, in the end, the entire Republic is to be only one immense New England. I cannot say I hope so, — in every sense, I mean.

As I came out of the post-office, on my way back to Dick Frazier's and General Throop there, I stopped to shake hands with young Evans. I have already alluded, in my letter to my wife, to a sojourn with the General at his cabin near our lands. Allow me to speak more particularly here of the same; permit me, in fact, to make a new chapter of it, going back, therefore, a few days.

V.

Had the babe been housed within,
Romulus had never been!
Had he sucked his mother's breast,
Rome had never reared its crest!
From between the she-wolf's paws
He gave the world its master's laws!

General Theodore Throop differed from me as, I suppose, the South has differed, since the world was created, from the North; he was too slow, as I was possibly too fast. I dare say the General's established position for half a century in the highest social circle of Charleston, had been the molding influence in virtue of which the old gentleman was such a Louis Le Grand in tones and bearing, and stately but gracious inertia, even. He rarely alluded to the subject, but, for him, there was no future; why should he hurry himself? My wife says I cannot live except when in motion, and am happiest when most driven, and it did try me sorely to wait for General Throop; or would have tried me had not my Southern wife accustomed me so long to waiting for her, never

up to the instant, I regret to record it of her, since the ceremony of our marriage, when she kept us all waiting full twenty minutes behind time. As we journeyed together, did business to large amounts together, I knew all along his determinations in matters, days before he had reached them himself; had said over and over to myself all he was slowly going to say upon a subject a dozen times before he had spoken. Yet I enjoyed the venerable gentleman even while I inwardly fussed at his ponderous propriety, and outran exceedingly his cultured slowness. There are as true gentlemen in Boston as the General, but he was of another variety altogether: a huge water-melon ripening asleep in the sun, as compared with a seckel pear, small but closely buttoned up to the chin in its perfect-fitting suit of brown and red: say, rather, and be done with it, a pine-apple contrasted with a pippin, — but a pippin as from the Garden of the Hesperides, of rarest flavor as well as of royal size.

What I wanted to say, when I began all this, was, that we two found it impossible to make our trip between Dick Frazier's tavern in Brownstown, and the General's proposed place down the river, in one day; the General being altogether too de-

liberate for that in waking, dressing, breakfasting, riding, looking over the land, conversing about its varied localities for corn and cotton, house and gin; and this explains how we came to ride one afternoon up to the cabin of Mose Evans, whose lands "joined on" ours, to stay, as Mose had assured us we could, all night. Now ten million people of our population, far from the worst of said population, live in just such cabins. We ride up to a rough paling fence, well whitewashed, as are the cabin and the hen-coops, and the trunk of every forest and fruit tree in the inclosure, the spotless geese wearing the same livery, as they string out of the front gate in the morning, and back in the evening, from the river flowing immediately before the house. Mrs. Evans had been described to us as being a devoted mother, a model housewife in point of neatness, but, alas, a woman of temper most terrible; our many informants insisting specially upon this last feature of her character. I called General Throop's attention, as we hallooed from our saddles and waited for a reply, before dismounting, to the row of reddened bricks from the gate on either side of the pebbled walk to the porch; to the brilliant tin pans sunning upon thoroughly scrubbed shelves around the well

in the yard, the long pole thereof, as also oaken bucket, seeming just from the same process. At this moment Mrs. Evans appeared, knitting in hand, upon the porch, and, with eyes shaded from the setting sun by the stocking held in her hand, bade us "light." It was so very easy, the way in which General Throop conquered our dreaded hostess upon her outpost and on the instant! Before he was half-way up the walk he had taken off his hat. It was natural to him; it was not natural to me following him, and I did not do it. Had she been the wife of Washington, he could not have been, and from sheer nature, more respectful. "Mrs. Evans, I presume?" hat in hand and with a grave inclination of his white head. And when, in manner adapted to his own, she had bidden us enter — "I am ashamed, madam, to step with such boots upon your porch!" For steps of stone, pine floor, rude posts and railing of the porch, doors opening upon it from the cabin, the very pegs in the whitewashed logs from which bags of dried seeds were hung, all were of almost painful cleanness, the hide-bottom chairs pure and white from incessant soap and sand. After our weeks upon the road and at Dick Frazier's, the snowy towels and tablecloth, especially the coarse

but very clean sheets and pillow cases at night, were luxuries to General Throop I was glad of. To me Mrs. Evans was simply a tall, well-looking, neatly dressed female who had worried her husband to death, and who might, unless Odd Archer and Brownstown had lied to me, drive us from under her roof any moment by her termagant tongue. People had told the General the same, but, like all Southern gentlemen, he instinctively invested every white woman with certain chivalric attributes of sister, daughter, wife, mother, elevating her into an ideal being whom they call Woman, a creation, like Dulcinea del Toboso, having no existence outside imagination. In the most natural manner, all the time of our acquaintance, General Throop idealized Mrs. Evans, and she *was* idealized; that is, he assumed and she accepted and acted upon the assumption, that she was Woman.

Mose Evans observed it, at table, for I can read *men*, though he was merely a big and very handsome and bearded boy. Had General Throop said much about her admirable cookery, it would have ruined all; only a sincere word or two, his manner, his evident enjoyment of his meals, did everything. "He makes more work than all the rest of

the housekeeping," the mother said of her son in the course of conversation, "always in the fields with the hands, hunting and the like, he cannot help muddying and tearing his things, I know. But he does not haunt the town, never enters a doggery, does n't know a card, thank Heaven! and, then, I will not have any woman to help me!" This last for reasons with reference to her son, too, as I well knew. I wonder if people like General Throop do really stop at and sleep upon the surface of things as they seem to. "In these days of the overthrow of everything," the General remarked, amazingly brightened up after a very substantial supper upon coffee, venison, and the perfection of corn bread and butter, "my intention, Mrs. Evans, is to adopt the very life you are now leading. That is, if I close with Mr. Anderson here." The General and myself had really and finally reached certainty about that, only his outer person, so to speak, had not yet arrived. "I never talk politics," the General added. "There are, in fact, no politics to talk. Victorious force has destroyed all I hold worth living for. We have entered, as did Greece and Rome, upon the era of military despotism and all corruption. The only glory is of gold, and that is evanescent!

Excuse me. We may, in case I should close with Mr. Anderson, be neighbors. Mrs. Throop and my daughter Agnes. My only son, Theodore Throop, gave his life, at Sumter, for his country, but I did not desire to speak of that. We bury ourselves in these primeval woods purposely, the world forgetting, by the world forgot. I like your son, madam," for that individual had gone to look to our horses. "I pride myself, Mrs. Evans, upon being a judge of character, and I am free to say, he seems to me to be a thoroughly manly and sensible person, as he certainly is most prepossessing in his outer man. You should be, and doubtless are, very proud of him, madam!"

Now, I knew Evans to be all of this and more, but I could not have kept it from seeming flattery if I had said it. The bearing of the stately old soul gave such weight to all his remarks.

"He is all I have!" was her only reply, and she was halted, I saw, at the mention of that daughter!—with reference to any possible results concerning her son, halted, like a female panther guarding her cub. And I began to understand this Xantippe, by help of what I had heard, through and through!—But I could have laughed aloud. Miss Agnes Throop! The flower and per-

fection of Charleston culture; the belle of all its beauties by their own confession. Agnes Throop and this handsome boor; Beauty and the Beast; heaven and earth are not more removed. "You seem to be pleased at something, sir?" It was the panther again, with her head ever so little upon one side, a gleam of danger in her eyes, and quicker knitting!

How people do have to steer in the rapids of life, barely grazing the rocks! And the steering is sometimes very like lying.

"Ah, General," I readily exclaimed, "Mrs. Evans has her household duties. Were you to seclude yourself from all the outer world, as you threaten, you would have to take to books as some persons take to drinking!" And, to make my blunder worse, I glanced around as I said it.

"Not one! Except an old Bible, not one book or paper in the house!" Mrs. Evans said it out, and I to myself in the same instant. I began to take deeper interest in her! It was not at all to me, it was in subjection to the inquiring yet perfectly respectful "Ah?" of General Throop, that Mrs. Evans gave us her version of their family history. Not at once. Doubtless she brooded day and night over her story, and it forced its way out

by a sort of fermentation during our after acquaintance. But it was to my companion she always addressed herself, and to him exclusively. He seemed, in some way, to have brought back a former life, as of ages ago, to her mind. One day, during our many calls at her cabin, she showed us her husband's daguerreotype. I had a suspicion that it had lain unopened in the bottom of some trunk until very lately.

"He was evidently, madam, a gentleman and a scholar," the General said, after long and grave inspection of the faded and old-fashioned picture. "And he seems," he added as he returned to its inspection, "to have been somewhat broken down. Ill health, I presume?"

The woman did not reply. I saw that she refrained by an effort from looking at me. Odd Archer explained it all to me afterward, as we shall see. Yet I must say here that he hated the woman, connected, I think, as chief witness with one of his manifold disgraces. I made allowance for its being from him in all I learned from his very unreliable lips. Yet Brown County agreed the woman had worried and scolded the miserable husband to death. Somehow she had embroiled and broken him up along a series of downward

removals. What books remained to him were his only refuge. To give value to these pages, I would like greatly to know whether they were sold for bread, lost in their many moves, burned accidentally. It would be dramatic if Brown County was right, but I do not certainly know, and therefore cannot say, whether or no Mrs. Evans in her storms of temper did really, as Brown County asserted, rend to fragments and burn the poor fellow's volumes to the very last leaf. From what Chaucer makes his Wife of Bath confess of her tempestuous course in reference to the volumes of *her* bookish husband, I think this quite likely.

I had bought a picture or two, had heard Helen and others talk, as well as listened to some of what Ruskin has to say, enough to enjoy a little grouping of trees, cows, children — any light and shade and life. Therefore I remember the morning after our first night at Mrs. Evans's double log cabin. As we afterward learned, Mose had got up about midnight, watched from a tree a certain worn ravine down which the deer came to drink in the river at dawn, and returned by breakfast with the antlered result. I could have painted it if I could have painted anything, that morning scene. He had hung the buck to a limb of a live-oak off to

one side in the yard. From respect for his mother's ideas of neatness, I suppose, he had disemboweled the beast before we appeared, so that no reminder even remained, and was slowly flaying the animal as it hung, replying, as he did so, to the General standing by greatly interested; for there is an occult connection between chivalry and hunting, since Esau. The General, his white hair uncovered to the air, and aglow with the bright morning, a sound sleep and hearty breakfast, was admiring the young Esau more than his prey. No wonder. I would n't have given the man a hundred a year as entry clerk in our office; but he was worth thousands as a picture. He was in leather from head to foot, the fringe along hunting frock and cape, and general neatness throughout, telling of his mother. His old cap lay at the stock of his rifle, which was leaning against the well near by, and his uncovered head with its abundant hair was as glorious as that of a god, the sun striking upon its gold. He seemed a model, in all his vigorous frame, of absolute youth, health, strength. It was the sneer of Brown County, the watch Mrs. Evans kept upon Mose, and his consequent purity in all regards; and the complexion of the man, the childlike unconsciousness of his manner, the

infantile steadiness and clearness of his brow, and of his eyes in yours — you see, I can no more paint with pen than with brush!

"I never met a nobler youth in my life," the General said, as we rode off about our lands. "He seems to me to be of the very chivalry of nature. Good blood, rest assured. Possibly his father may have come of some Carolina or Virginia family. Good material for a man if fallen into the right hands. I intend to have him supply us with game, *if* we close our matter, Mr. Anderson. I think he would interest Agnes; you know we will not bring even our negroes — former slaves, I should say — or our dogs, if we remove."

"I have puzzled myself," I replied, "as to why his mother has allowed him to grow up untaught. Jealous even of books, because she never opens one? Hating them as the preference of her husband to her, his last resort from her? Or sheer indifference and brutal ignorance! The only intellect the woman ever had has run into temper; vixen, virago, termagant, they tell me."

"I never allow myself, Mr. Anderson," General Throop makes grave reply, "to speak disrespectfully of others. Therefore no one speaks, I believe, disrespectfully of me. Or, it is to their face,

when I must speak. Excuse me, as so much the elder, but I never express myself with other than respect of the aged, of the helpless, especially of woman. You need not always speak, you know. As I said before, yes, sir, her son is noble material. But for what? If there is a future for this most miserable country, I do not know it!"

VI.

Not with cathedral's granite fires
The heart flames up its loftiest spires.
God's husbandry is fullest done
Where falls the rain and shines the sun.
Our grapes may be the hot-house yield,
But bread by harvests grows afield!
Its grandest gain your spirit doth
Attain amid the forest growth.
To wheat and oak and flower and you
Most life where freest falls the dew.
Where wind unhindered blows there most
Its Archetype the Holy Ghost!

In one point we were unanimous at the post-office, that day I first met the worthies assembled therein, and this was that we would all go and hear the Rev. Mr. Parkinson preach next Sunday. He had come in for his letters while we were assembled there, a pale, thin, long-haired, exceedingly shy youth, fresh from the institution which prepared him for the pulpit. So very long had Brownstown been without the services of any minister, of his denomination, at least, that he was accepted as a novelty, an experiment, a mild sen-

sation, even. The members of his church were the richest men around, having been the first settlers of Brown County. Doubtless no stricter members existed when in the North Carolina from which they removed; but "things had got awfully torn up," as the patriarch among them himself told me, during the absence of a pastor — very much so indeed if I was to accept the unanimous statement of all I met.

Now, my host, Mr. Robinson, was a member and officer of the church of which Mr. Parkinson was the very youthful minister. He was a very tall man, exceedingly stooped in his old age, and answered to the title of Squire, Judge, Colonel, General, Deacon, or Elder, as the case might be, and although not quite so bad as Odd Archer, yet even he had fallen, unless greatly slandered, into singular courses in reference to card-playing and horse-racing. Sabbath having come, there was quite a congregation of us at church. And a tumble-down old "cathedral" it was; for an Irishman, in excess of native politeness, alluded to it as such in my hearing the week after. A miserable old disused dwelling it was, that Sabbath, and has fulfilled before this, I do hope, what was then its fixed intention of tumbling down.

"The entire Robinson connection are on the ground," Odd Archer informed me before we entered the house. "North Carolina! See it? Stamped in strong family likeness: tall, red-haired, sandy-complexioned, gaunt as their hogs, long armed and legged, inflexible. As strong a family likeness among them as there is in a boat-load of clams — their very noses long and insisting like those of the animals mentioned! In fact, they are Scotch-Irish, but sadly degenerate after two centuries of emigration. Sir," Odd Archer adds, "my father is to-day one of their most eminent divines. He was out here once, preached to them and to me. But it was too much for him, these people and myself."

Yet this disreputable limb of the law is evidently arrayed in the best suit of his shabby black, to do honor to the day and place; and in certain curious aspects, tones, bearing, is as thorough a gentleman as General Throop; and with a mutual bow, these two exchanged the civilities of the hour before the General passed on into the place of worship.

"A religious man, the General, I see," the lawyer added. "A gentleman always is. Washington was. I am a hopeless case myself, but I

can and do respect religion in others! If they are not actually bringing my pet to church! How are you, Dob?" For Dick Frazier, hotel-keeper and sheriff, presses past us through the throng round the entrance at this moment, with a man heavily ironed. "Dob Butler," my informant explains, "the worst desperado in all Brown County. You see, he would n't stay in the jail, breaks out. It is a good idea having him at church; it rests Dick Frazier and may do Dob some good. His case is on at court next week. Oh, I will clear him! No doubt about his guilt, murdered a teamster, but he kept money enough to put him through! How are you, Harry! Now, Harry, be a gentleman. No fun here! Dr. Jones, excuse me! Pardon the liberty, but seeing it is Sunday and church, you ought to have dressed up a little, Doc."

"Only what I wore every day in Philadelphia." Dr. Alexis Jones makes cool reply, for he is dressed in the extremity of fashion.

"Is there not, excuse me, something offensive in the air?" the lawyer says, with his fingers to his ruby nose; "pity it should be under the church — polecat, I 'm afraid!"

The youthful physician cannot but color a little

at this reference to his perfumery, and hastens to turn the topic.

"But how singular, gentlemen! here in this nineteenth century attending church; so far as I am concerned, as well be at a pagoda in Japan!" In fact Dr. Jones prided himself upon his unbelief, as being the one precious possession which specially distinguished him from and elevated him above the common herd, and made it prominent accordingly, very much as he did his broadcloth and jewelry. As the young man passes in, Odd Archer, Esq., says, in a plaintive manner, "I can stand a scoundrel, like Dob Butler in there, or myself, but a consummate fool" —

At this juncture we are swept along with a number of people, male and female, into the long, low, dingy room used as a church; and as nearly twenty thousand of our best preachers labor every Sabbath under like circumstances, along the line of the nation's advance westward, let me review, for my gratification if not for yours, dear reader, this Sabbath service with Mose Evans, Mr. Robinson, and the rest, Mr. Parkinson preaching. Because there is a heroism in such service. Planks have been so disposed upon hide-bottom chairs as to make seats sufficient to accommodate the two

or three hundred persons present, while the youthful clergyman has his special chair beside a little well inked and whittled school desk by the huge fire-place at one end of the apartment; to which now this, now that member of the congregation comes during sermon and stands beside the preacher, warming first one, then the other of his or her feet, listening, somewhat in the attitude of a critic, to the discourse in progress. There was a puncheon plank, a foot or so off to the left from the fire-place, which I heard Mr. Robinson warn the young minister of before sermon, as sure to let him through into the cellar below, if he should step upon it. There were never less than seven children running about the room all through and through the sermon; the number of smaller members of the congregation crying at once I attempted but failed to count, owing to inadequacy of brains for labor so multiform. Besides, in order to see his sermon, Mr. Parkinson had piled two brickbats from the old hearth under each leg of the little table before him, and was in evident terror all along lest a touch of his hand should topple the pulpit, and, with it, the entire service and Sabbath, over, as actually did occur some weeks after! And the poor young fellow is as

thoroughly unfitted for his ministry of such a flock as a man can possibly be. Yet I do not know! He is as fair and frail as a flower, and his congregation are robust, sunburned, hardened to work, and, a good many of them, to wickedness. He knows nothing about the world, and they know nothing about books. Things they are accustomed to as matter of course are repulsive and impossible to him! The exceeding contrast may have done the people good, like that of a woman to a man! But, oh, that sermon! A plea for the personality of the devil, I remember, making Satan very nebulous, however, from excess of drapery. Perfectly true in general and utterly false in particular, merest moonshine as to practical effect upon the people, who waited with waning patience for him to get through. Mr. Robinson was in a hide-bottom chair to the left, tilted against the wall upon its hind legs, solemnly and soundly asleep. To do the preacher justice, he and his subject both became more practical toward the close. And it was Mose Evans, listening with large, earnest eyes, like a big boy who really wanted to know all about the matters concerning which the minister spoke, who steadied him, until unconsciously he stopped *preaching* and began to *tell* him, in

reply to his eager eyes, all the theologian himself knew about it.

"For God's sake, Mr. Parkinson," I said to him afterward, when we had become thoroughly acquainted with each other, "don't talk in abstract essays to these folks. Your discourse is so elaborate that, so to speak, it chills and changes you into a sort of ecclesiastical automaton the moment you begin to deliver it. Why clothe yourself (for I want you to do good here) in such a mannerism of starch and silk? You are not a medicine-man among savages, relying upon your feathers and paint to conjure them out of their evil case! These are common-sense, sinning, suffering men and women. God has given you a sufficient gospel to save them with. Use it, man! Speak it out plainly, squarely, to the sin and need of the congregation. Don't speak of your Creator as 'the Deity.' And Satan is not 'the ethereal effluence of essential evil;' call him the devil and be done with it! Whom are you so afraid of? They will respect you and listen to you and be benefited by you as you fear no one but your Master. Be as practical, Bible in hand, as if you were driving a trade! Odd Archer before a jury, liar, rogue, lewd dog that he is, has a thou-

sand times your sense in his way of pleading his cause" —

But never mind. To go back to the congregation, — the second object of interest at church was old New Hampshire. Burdett, Seth Burdett, is his name; I should have recorded it before. To the amazement of Brownstown he came out, the old, hard, tough postmaster, in a new light altogether that day. After giving out a familiar hymn the young minister sat blushing and paling in the silence which followed, broken as it soon was by certain titterings among the young ladies present. "If any friend can raise the tune" — the preacher said, at last. I had not been to singing-school in New England for nothing, and had already hit upon Ortonville as the orthodox tune for the hymn announced. But the postmaster was from New England, also, and, to the profound astonishment of all there, raised that very tune and in full voice himself! Like the others he was carefully attired in his best, and was as practical, persistent, and undaunted in leading the singing as in all else. It was music from a stone Memnon indeed! His voice was somewhat shrill, but not without a certain quaint and old-fashioned sweetness too, and we all joined in when a verse or two had given the world assurance of a tune!

I can see at this instant the horse-thief and murderer — Dob Butler — sitting in his chains beside the county sheriff, Dick Frazier, in the farthest right-hand corner, the jail being too frail to be relied upon for an hour, even; how the clink, now and then, of the fetters still sounds upon my ear as during the sermon then, through all the manifold noises of the years since!

Immediately in front of the minister were the rest of the Robinsons, male and female, who all seemed to me like a party of school children caught in a melon patch, stealing, and who had made solemn promise to do so no more.

I found General Throop talking with Mose Evans out of doors after service that day. He was as carefully arrayed as his saddle-bags allowed, but in coarsest jeans he would have been General Theodore Throop and — Charleston — still.

It made a vast difference to Mose Evans, the being dressed in his Sunday best, a modest suit of gray stuff. He was twenty-three years old, as I was told, of stalwart yet perfect proportions, with abundant hair and beard, silken and of that peculiar shade of gold called, Helen tells me, by painters, "lion's eye," — as handsome a man as I ever saw in my life, his glory lying in his large, frank

eyes, sincerity, simplicity, absolute independence, supreme health, cordial willingness to be hearty friend or enemy, as you saw fit!

I was the more interested in him as his home joined the General's estate, and he was being employed to oversee certain improvements toward the removal of the family from Charleston — the lands being yet exactly as they were left after Creation and Deluge. I think it was the day after that Sunday's service that Odd Archer remarked to me, in continuation, "Mose Evans is, sir, a child of nature! As you will pay me no fee for lying in the matter, I will add that the man is, from sheer ignorance, I suppose, and lack of opportunity, considered to be as immaculate as King Arthur of the Round Table, — for I read a book occasionally as variety to steady wickedness."

"Is he very poor?" I began.

"Land!" My informant's only reply, but with an emphasis.

"We spent a night at his cabin; his mother seemed to be" — I venture.

"Vixen. Virago. Termagant. Xantippe. Should have been ducked to death as a notorious scold years ago. Sir," my companion gravely added, "it could be legally done in the river to-

morrow — statute law of old England never repealed. She killed her husband. This way. He was a professor in some Georgia college, years ago. Like those dry old pedants, fell desperately in love with his wife when a blooming girl, because, I suppose, she was so pretty and so ignorant. Mold her, you observe. Very soon she broke him up in Georgia. They had to move and move and keep moving, until they wound up here, where he died. Sir, that poor fellow was scientifically scolded to death! I tell you, Mr. Anderson, if Mrs. Evans had been a Madame Brinvilliers or La Farge, and made daily use of the lesser poisons of herb and crucible, it could not have been accomplished more systematically. I knew him. About his land titles. We lawyers have to know everybody and everything. He had been driven into a kind of dazed insanity long before he died. His poor body held out longest, being only the secondary object of her assault. The son does not know how to read, sir!"

"Mose Evans?"

"Mose Evans! Splendid specimen of a man as I ever saw in a jury box, or on trial for murder, yet cannot read. Owing to the peculiar unsettledness of their life and to his remarkable mother, as

they say of Cornelia and Martha Washington! I do not know if there ever were other children, but Mose is now her only child. She may love him, for what I know, but he never learned to read. I doubt whether she has ever opened a book since she was a school-girl. Fact, sir." All of which made me look with more interest upon Mose Evans, meeting him next day down the river by appointment in company with General Throop. Although I did not know of it until long afterward, I will mention it here that the man had begun to learn to read in those days. It was the old postmaster who taught him, very secretly, in the little back room of the old man's store, and at night. I am certain his mother knew nothing of it.

"This queer thing about it, sir," the lawyer had told me in the conversation just mentioned; "it is the poor fellow's mother has kept him clear of the women, virtuous and otherwise. I suppose he dreads them all as he dreads her, knowing his father's experience and his own. All the women about admire him, but they are too much afraid of his mother to speak to him, hardly!"

Aside from the mere gossip of Brown County, all this interested me to a singular degree. Fool-

ish as it may seem to you at this stage of my narrative, I regarded Mose Evans as a species of nugget I had most unexpectedly stumbled upon; and I propose to be rigidly statistical and accurate in regard to the man, as we all instinctively are where gold is in question. As I write he rises before me, illumined by all the wonders which followed; yet, had any lunatic imagined them all, and asked me if such things were possible of him, I would have said, even before those remarkable events took place, "Such things never entered my mind, sir, but now that you have raised the question as to their possibility, why, yes, sir, yes!" And I would have made the reply even with enthusiasm! Looking back over the whole affair, I do declare, as upon oath, before a notary public, that I regard Mose Evans as being the most remarkable man I ever knew. What is more, dear reader, I trust you will heartily agree with me before we part.

VII.

For transient guests, new wine in ready flasks:
For life-long friends, old wine from cellared casks!
The broker's window makes but small display,
In iron vaults his bullion hides away.
The world is richer where the willows weep
In men, than where the eager myriads sweep
The ways, in ranks a living million deep!

At the time of which I would now speak, General Throop and family had arrived in Brown County from Charleston, and were settled down in their new home upon the bank of the river, a few miles below Brownstown. The General and myself had carefully selected the site for the house. I am satisfied that the General entertained some vague idea of being the Romulus of a new Rome, or rather, and far better, the founder of a new Carolina, if not of a second Charleston, though ages must roll away before his purpose could be consummated. The glory of the place was in the baronial old live-oaks, bearded with sweeping gray moss, and extending their arms abroad over the

roof below, in perpetual benediction. There were plenty of magnolia-trees scattered around the cottage, as up and down the river for hundreds of miles, laden in season with their yellow-white flowers, and intoxicating the air with perfume. A paradise of a place, with its greensward, the broad verandah having a swinging hammock for the old General, in which he smoked the day through and the year round; smoked with set purpose, as if he would puff his soul and body, all his disastrous past, blasted present, and hopeless future away, to be lost and perish with the Confederate cause, as the smoke from his white moustached lips did in the air! No syllable of complaint about his personal fortunes; a vast deal, I confess, about the Federal government, and the era of "ism and rapid ruin over all the world!"

"The very prosperity, sir," he often said to me, "of your country, — *your* country, for it is not mine, — like that of Rome when it had fallen under the despotism of its Cæsars, is but the flush of the fever which is destroying it!" and much more to the same effect.

Whenever I happened for the night at the General's, in my many land excursions here and there over Brown County, I could not but observe the

Mary Martha Washington, their slave of whom I have already spoken, — their slave on religious principle, as sublimated by her delusion as was Mrs. General Throop by hers. I was to the old "girl" a specimen of the terrible variety of my race known as "an Abolitionist," alluded to during all her life, only in dark and shuddering whispers, as once the vilest and most venomous of mankind, and endured by her now only under protest!

But I am speaking of the home of the Throops. I had secured the services of Mose Evans as a kind of overseer, while the building was being erected. It was nothing but a pile of hewn logs, the cracks between carefully "chinked and daubed," that is, filled in with blocks of wood sawed for the purpose, and coated with mortar outside and inside alike. My "overseer" had given his heart to the work during the months it was in course of being constructed, before the arrival of the family, and Brown County in general came to see, and congratulated him upon the result. There were a good number of rooms carpeted with India matting, a comfortably furnished library, the parlor arranged as much like the one in Charleston as Mose Evans could manage it, from plans furnished

by me. The whole place, in fact, was a spot to spend a week of romance in, and then to weary to death of, unless alive with some deeper interest to you. The family were there simply as in exile, confident of living and dying in banishment. There was no possible reversal of their sentence; you would learn that much soon after your acquaintance! Knowing this, the household did all that human beings in their case could do to feel at home, and to be neighborly with all; their culture, however, marking them off as distinctly from the families and persons around as if they had arrived from another planet. I had ventured this last assertion to my venerable host, Mr. Robinson, one day during my sojourn with him, in the emergency of having no one else to say it to, only to be misunderstood, my friend being deaf of outer and inner hearing.

"From another plantation? so they *are;* sea-island cotton place somewhere there in Carolina. Twenty cents, I 'm told, when our best upland is only ten! Longer and finer staple, you see! Gin it with rollers instead of saws like us. Stuff it in a long bag hung through a hole in the gin floor, with a nigger and a crowbar, instead of a screw and press like us. Sing'lar, is n't it?"

Now I regret all the time I am writing, that, being merely an overworked business man, I cannot put upon paper the people inhabiting this, their new home, at the time I would speak of, all of whom I came to like almost beyond any persons I had ever known before. Certainly, they were to me a new and remarkable variation upon all my previous experiences. There was, for instance, the wife and mother. You have met invalids — I select the gentlest term — like Mrs. Throop, or my effort to place her before you is utter failure. Dickens would have run off with the comic side of her singular character, Thackeray with the tragic; torn to atoms, the poor lady, in either case. Ah me! I close my eyes and see her now! Nothing but a matron in deep black, with the simple manners of a lady, but with eyes which, with abnormal insight, arraign you on the instant, read your soul, condemn you, endure you merely for the present! "I myself used to sin like the rest of you," I have actually heard her say in conversation, "but I have got beyond all that. You are to me as I myself once was, therefore I know your very soul so well! I used all the forms and ceremonies; there in Charleston, not for myself, but for their influence on others. I do not regret being deprived of

them all here," for it was after her removal to the West I heard her that evening, many evenings, "since I had long done with them. Nothing in Sabbath or Scripture, prayer or praise, of service to me any longer. And how sorry, sorry I am for the rest of you!"

All that Agnes, so like and so utterly unlike her mother, could do on such occasions was to say, occasionally, "Oh, mother!" "Now, mother!" as to an invalid, or simply to hang her head in shame. The old General always gravely arose, when the topic came up, and walked sadly from the room.

"Our Theodore is, you know, Mr. Anderson, in heaven, — killed in Sumter! and I have so much, oh, so *very* much more actual companionship every day with him than I have with the General or with Agnes here! *we* two understand each other! You, poor creatures, how I do know and pity you!"

And there was Mr. Clammeigh! Once or twice he came out from Charleston to see them. I wish I could photograph him upon this page. Of course, his connection with Helen — I refer to my wife — prejudiced me. And why should I be so drawn toward and repelled from that cold, correct, polished, silent corpse of a man? I am from New

England, not from the tropics, yet there is some profound antipathy of our natures; my fault of excess, possibly, or his of deficiency. Lift a cabbage leaf and, in recoiling from the toad squatted beneath, you recoil from Mr. Clammeigh! smite asunder a primeval rock to find a living frog seated in its centre from the creation of the world, as indifferent to light as to darkness, to motion as to rest — "Now, *I* like Mr. Clammeigh!" Why should it always be said as in defense of the man? Hawthorne would analyze the inmost ice of this heart; I do not pretend to. About the only thing I know is, if Mr. Clammeigh. dwells, we will say, as at the North Pole, then Mose Evans has his home at the South Pole; never two men more exactly the opposite the one of the other! I have a sense of relief as I cease in despair from saying anything more upon the subject. I do not understand Mr. Clammeigh. Yet Mose Evans I do understand, as I do, may I say, a section of land, or a summer morning? The philosophy of it all, I suppose, is that Mose Evans is simply and purely nature, human nature!

Although it seems absurd to name Miss Agnes Throop in the same breath with the untutored backwoodsman in question, yet, if I was to say

that I never knew a manlier man than Mose Evans, I could add, and in the same sense, that I never met a womanlier woman than Miss Throop. Draped as she was from birth in the linens, silks, ribbons of conventionalism, thoroughly enveloped, as to her very soul, so to speak, in the subtler valenciennes of her peculiar breeding, she was, as if in virtue of her very refinement, so much the more woman, simply woman! Heaven knows what it was in her that reminded one of Eden and Eve. Small figure, dark yet ever variable eyes, hair of the same hue, peculiar grace of manner, highest culture of tone and bearing, natural grace and sweetness, — it is useless for me to attempt description, though all the army of nouns and adjectives marched to my assistance! I admire and love my wife as well as husband ever did, or could, yet next to her, I swear allegiance to this lady, because you can no more deny her being a queen, than you can deny her existence.

"I do thank you so sincerely, Mr. Anderson!" she said to me the day I dropped in upon them for the first time after their arrival; and, somehow, in giving me her cordial eyes and hand she gave me, if I dared to say it without being misunderstood, her heart and soul. "You and that Mr.

Evans have done so much more for us than we could have hoped, and in such a short time, too. It is a paradise of a place! There is so much in our taking a strong liking to a new home, and from the very first!"

But I cannot record the conversation. As much in tone and manner as in words, she let me know that she perfectly understood her new position and intended to fill it. To make up to her parents for wealth, slaves, health, lost son and brother, Charleston, the whole world they had forever lost, — this was the task she had taken upon her. Task is not the word, nor duty, nor even pleasure; this was to be her glad life thenceforth! Fascination? And consisting as much in my weakness as in her peculiar power? Perhaps so. Yet I insist upon the fact that all persons coming under her influence were affected, more or less, in the same way. Not my own sex only, the other also, which makes it the more wonderful.

VIII.

You may love your father, mother,
Friend on friend, your sister, brother,
Love like that a hundred other.
But Eve alone had Adam's kiss,
One Eve, one Adam! More than this
Were watered wine, bewildered bliss!
For, when your highest love is won,
For first and last your love is done.
Thou God art Love, and Thou art One!

I WAS much occupied, after I had seen the Throops fairly fixed in their new home, with the affairs of our company. I had to examine in person large bodies of land, not merely in Brown County but over the entire State. My wife has likened me to a sparrow-hawk. Certainly no fowl of the air could come and go upon the wing more irregularly, hardly more swiftly than myself. The fact is, money was to be made, just there and then, and a good deal of it. In consequence, I often lost sight of the Throops, and for long periods at a time, for I had to come and go, too, between Charleston and Brownstown more than once at

this juncture. I made a rapid call upon the General whenever I possibly could, but my head-quarters were chiefly, for land reasons, with Mr. Robinson, patriarch as he was both in church and state. On one of my rapid returns for the moment to Brownstown, Odd Archer, Esq., had laid hands upon me as I alighted in front of Dick Frazier's hotel, from my mustang.

"Look here, Major Anderson," he said, "I 've tre-men-dous news for you, sir! It will astonish you, sir, tough to astonishment as I 'll acknowledge you are!"

"That you have given up drinking, and the like, Mr. Archer? Yes," I replied, "I *am* astonished. If it will only hold out." But I decline to narrate what followed upon the part of the reprobate lawyer. The fact is, I halted him in mid-volley, so to speak, mounted my weary animal, and, caked in mud, as well as ravenously hungry and dead tired as I was, rode through the swamp and the darkness to Mr. Robinson's plantation, miles out of town. Upon some topics I "had to stand Odd Archer," as the county phrase ran; upon the subject of his remarks just then, "I could n't and would n't and did n't!" to use the same county dialect.

Even when comfortably seated with Mr. Robinson, after a particularly hearty supper beneath his roof, I shrank from asking questions. No questions were needed. The matter mentioned to me by the lawyer was the epidemic astonishment of all Brown County; it was impossible for my host not to speak of it. But I allowed him to approach it in his own way. "Oh, yes," he said, "we all know Mose Evans. Everybody likes Mose, takes a fancy to him from the first, like you. And it is nigh impossible to stir him up. But when he *is* roused! You never heard, Mr. Anderson, of the thrashing he gave Job Peters? Oh, well, hardly worth telling, at least not to-day, Sunday. Job did not know, I suppose, about Miss Agnes Throop. Not then! He does now! We all do *now*, of course! Job whispered something about her to Mose; he will never say what it was, and no man dares ask Mose. Only one blow! Nary another! I tell you they were so long bringing Job to, with their buckets of water dashed on him, that they began to believe Job had gone for good!" To the place where the bad Jobs go, I say to myself; for we all know Job Peters, too, as well as we do Mose Evans. Job is the only brother of Harry Peters, the native Joe Miller of Brown County, but "all the cussedness,"

Mr. Robinson remarked, "of the family was in Job." Harry's fun was enjoyed by the passing object of it, most of any; somehow Job's fun was very apt to draw a blow in return, — a curse, at least.

"There is one thing about Mose Evans will astonish you," Mr. Robinson proceeds; "I never think of Mose, but as a great big promising lad. Why, Mr. Anderson, that man" —

"Pardon me, I 've been told of it five hundred times, — cannot read," I reply.

"And no better rider in Brown County," says Mr. Robinson, "no better neighbor in a bear-fight, no better shot, as good a planter, let alone being too easy with his black ones."

"They told me, as I came through town" — I interrupt, with considerable reluctance, too.

For so old a man, my host snatches the topic from my lips with singular eagerness.

"It was the first day Father Hailstorm preached after her people moved here," he said, filling his cob-pipe full again as for a good talk. "You see, she came for the first time to our meeting that day" — strong pull at his pipe — "with her old father, the General there. What a powerful gentleman he is to look at; high-toned, too! But,

fact is, sir, *I* never saw anything so wonderful in her: a nice lady, a very nice lady, of course, but more like a whiff of smoke! *My* taste is something solid, substantial, healthy, stout, you see!" my informant added frankly, his wife quite overflowing two hundred pounds, and every freckled daughter upon the ascending path to the same avoirdupois, or more.

"That day there at church, it was Father Ransom preached; I disremember what month, but it was Ransom, sure; Hailstorm, they call him. That is the way I come to remember. She took her seat upon the front plank, — lit on it like you see a chip-bird on a twig, her father with her; so crowded, you see, no other place. I always set on one side the stand, — keeps the folks in order when they know I see every soul of them, — and I thought of it the moment she came in. And so you are that old General Theodore Throop and his daughter, I said to myself, come out to get better and better acquainted? Glad to see you, and not so glad either. Hailstorm! I know you won't believe it, sir, but I tell you the fact. One day years ago when the folks started for church, I stayed at home. I 'll bet you a bale, I said to Judy as she got up on the horse-block, — we had

run down a little in our ways then, so long without a preacher of our own denomination, — a bale, I said, if I do not tell you, sitting here upon my front porch, just as much of the sermon, a mile away it was, as you do. See if I don't! such a tremendous voice he has, Father Ransom."

"I hope you lost your bale, Judge," I remarked, Judge being the phase of Mr. Robinson's character when spoken to just then.

"I do not approve of betting!" as from the bench, my friend gravely replied, in contradiction to statements I had heard of him, "or they would have had to pay! You know wife and the girls claim a bale each, of the crop when it goes to the port. In county sales," by which my host meant account of sales, "the price is given of their bales separate; for calicoes, ribbons, hoop-skirts, and things, you know! Of course I could n't hear until the old man, a most an excellent man he is, got warmed up. After that? I managed even to guess out the text!"

"But about Miss Agnes Throop, Squire?"

"What I 'm talking about!" my friend Mr. Robinson added. "It will kill you, I said to myself very first thing when I saw her take that seat in reach of his very hand — so close I was afraid

he would strike her *that* way, too, when he got a-going. You see, the old man forgets everything but the sinners and their danger. And" — my friend continued after considerable pause — "we *do* have some hard cases among us for *sure!* And he knows exactly *how* case-hardened they are! I tell you he mauls them! And not one bit of use their pretending to slip out to look after their animals! One good mile all around! Unless them fellows actually mount and ride for it, they can't help hearing, — after the old man gets roused, I mean! A most an excellent man; does *his* duty, yes, sir! And I 've noticed this," my friend proceeds after a serious pause, "this," — longer pause, — oh, well, this: he tells them just what and who they are, and, very plainly, pre-cisely where they are going! Makes *that* awful plain! hair stand on an end, you see. Not to say he ever shook us of the Robinson connection much; not of our denomination, you know. If Brother Parkinson nor no other of our own church had never come, we never would have joined any church but our own. That is n't our way, in politics or religion! But before he closes, — Hailstorm, I mean, — he always speaks of the Saviour for every one of them that will repent, and always in the lowest tones!

May be he is worn out, no voice left. But it is *if* they repent and believe, — powerful plain upon that *if;* weeping, too, and everybody else, for that matter! It may be because of what goes before, but this last part of his sermon always brings them! I mean, does them most good!"

"But, Miss Agnes Throop?" I have to add, for my friend is gravely thinking of something else.

"Oh, her! That day? Well, I watched her as he got a-going. She was actually frightened for a while. His voice is tremendous! And he never preaches less than an hour and a half. She? Like a prairie flower in a whirlwind, sitting almost in the whirl of his arms, most of his voice over her head, somehow. Fact is, I forgot all about her as he drew toward the close; the old man was speaking of amazing love to the worst case there, tears running down his white beard, worse than the perspiration before; we were all weeping, all except myself, I believe. Oh, her? I happened to notice her as the old man fell back in his hide-bottom chair, sermon done. She was crying, too, more like a flower you have seen all beaten down and drenched after a heavy shower. Not that I think her what you would call pretty, mind. Too frail-

like, swinging on a stem a breath would break. Now, I like solid, well, fleshy" —

"I wónder when Mose Evans first saw her," I said at this point. "When was it, General?"

"That is what I 'm coming to, if you 'll only give me time," my friend makes eager reply. "That very day it was! You see I always sit on the right of the stand — a loose puncheon plank there, and ever so many children coming about during preaching, to drink from the preacher's water there on the stand. That day Mose Evans he got crowded on to the end of a plank seat, farthest end, not six inches to sit on, holding on by gripping into a crack between the logs behind him some way. Oh, I noticed Mose! The instant that Miss Agnes Throop came crowded along after the old General, her head down, I noticed Mose looking at her as any man would; she a newcomer, somehow not like our other girls, you see. It was only *that* after she sat down!" and the narrator illustrated his meaning by a snap of finger and thumb. "Oh, I saw it all! She lifted up her head and looked modestly about. The instant her eyes fell upon Mose Evans" —

"Well?" I demanded, after some silence.

"For my life, I never *could* see, for my soul I

never *can* see, what it is in her!" my friend said in accents of complaint. "Eyes? Yes. Everybody 's got eyes. And I know hers are what you 'd call larger eyes than usual. Brown? I believe they *are* brown eyes. And she 's so slight put together, does n't weigh more 'n half of our Betsy spinning in the cook-house back there all the week. Poor thing! Loss of their property that wild brother of hers dead back in Carolina pining, the girls tell me, for that chippy sort of a Clammeigh that came out to see her. Eyes? She seems all eyes, — the frailest thing!"

"But about Mose Evans, Colonel?"

"Struck like by lightning, sir!" (Gravest animation.) "The girls say it is all my fancy. I suppose I can see if I *am* seventy! The moment her eyes fell on that man's face, great big man as he is, over a hundred and eighty! — he was sitting, Mose Evans was, on less than half a foot of the plank end, holding hard to the crack behind him to keep that — the moment she looked him in the face, that man, sir, great big fool that he is, wilted like — like — whether he was astonished, scared. . . . You see, all his life Mose has lived in the woods. If she is pretty, *I* cannot see, and all even of the men folks say the same, so very much

of it! But that poor fellow fell in love with her like falling down a well! I sat so near, happened to be looking so close, the matter has made so much talk since, I often think of it; it was her eyes, sir, and they hit and killed that man! Never saw anything like it in all my life. A perfect fool he has made of himself. I 'm as certain as a man can be of anything, he never heard a sound of Father Ransom's sermon! Staring at first at her as if he had never seen a woman before! She is not like the common run of girls, I acknowledge. Soon as he saw how she colored up and turned away, he was careful not to do that, only stealing a look out of the corners of his eyes, his face toward the preacher all the time, and no more hearing that preacher" —

"I wonder if he ever" — I suggested.

"Went to their place there on the river?" my informant anticipated me. "No, *sir!* Nor ever mentioned her name to a soul, that *I* know of. He would n't have given Job Peters that blow, — only one blow it was, whatever Job said, — if he had stopped to think. For her sake, you see, he would n't have done it. And he never annoys her like by following her about. Mose Evans is as high a toned a gentleman as I know; owns thou-

sands of acres of best bottom lands. You 'll see his brand of stock, an E in a circle, scattered fifty miles around. Pity he never learned to read. People laugh at Mose Evans, but they like him, too, more even than they do Harry Peters ; you see there 's a thousand times more in him ! It is here as it always is where young people are, good deal of courting going on. But not *this* sort ! Mose Evans is as still and silent about it as you please, but it 's the most powerful sort of love ever known in these parts ! Because it has changed Mose Evans so ! They say he is learning to read, and if that young fellow had been off to college — pshaw, not that ; look at that Dr. Alexis Jones ! I mean if he had clerked ten years in a dry goods store, — it would n't have transmogrified him so, as the boys say. All the women pity and despise Mose Evans, only they can't help understanding and not understanding it ! And Miss Throop 'll never have him. That man 's no more to her than if he was a big live-oak she happened to pass, no more to her than a dog or an ox. She from Charleston, and — he ? It would kill that proud old General. And there 's that man Clammeigh, too, out here once from Charleston. Out of a bandbox. What a cool cowcumber sort of a fellow

he is! Rich, is n't he? Saw him at church, and looks like it. But there 's the bell for supper!" my host adds, rising upon his very long legs and putting his cob-pipe on the joist over the door. "I do believe it is actually killing Mose. Sounds redickerlous! A man could knock an ox off its tracks with his fist. Man of strong sense, too. Somebody ought to tell her, and stop it. They seem to like you, Major Anderson; suppose you stop it. But, supper; come!"

In the course of conversation at table, Mrs. Robinson tells me, at length, of the black woman of the Throops, who persists in considering herself their property, because the Bible says she is.

"I tell you, Judy," my host breaks in with energy, "it is not that negro's religion at all. It 's that Miss Agnes has bewitched her! Slave? Look at that poor Mose Evans!"

IX.

Fall'n from its Maker's hand, so long ago,
And from such height, our world's descending rate,
Like a dropped star, is ever swifter still
And swifter. Swifter all things on it, too,
Haste to their close; and life, most swift of all,
Speeds every day unto more sudden death!

I WAS very busy in real estate here and there over Brown County, for some weeks after Mr. Robinson had told me of the disaster to Mose Evans from the unconscious hands — I should rather say eyes — of Miss Agnes Throop. I cannot recall how long it was after said conversation that I heard, as I rode into Brownstown one foggy day, of the disaster, in a more terrible sense, to the mother of Mose Evans. It was Dr. Alexis Jones who told me of it, nearly running me down as I floundered along through the mud, his "bright bay" in a foam under him, a portentous case of surgical instruments upon the pommel of his saddle. He told me the news without drawing rein, and Dick Frazier informed me afterwards that the

doctor was only withheld by a good deal of profanity and physical force on the part of Frazier himself and others, from fleshing his maiden steel upon the dead woman by carving her to fragments in the interests of medical science!

"Mrs. Evans is dead! — yes, sir, — as a hammer!" Dr. Alexis Jones said it, as he joined me, with the keen satisfaction which we all have in telling news, bad as well as good; and as if, in some way, his personal importance was augmented thereby. "Broke a blood-vessel in a dispute with Odd Archer!" he explained. "It was about those cattle of hers he insisted were only strayed, and she knew had been run off by Dob Butler, that rascally client of his. What business had he to be on her place talking about it? The court-room was the only place for any talk about that, with judge and sheriff to keep the peace. Primed himself, you bet, with some of Dick Frazier's strychnine whisky before he went. You see, her son, Mose Evans, has gone down to the 'Port' with a load of cotton. Odd Archer knew that, before he went to the house. But you must excuse me; *post mortem*, you see; glad of the chance!" And, with a cut of his whip, Dr. Jones added as he galloped off, "Nobody will ever know

the facts. The coroner examined Archer, of course. Mere form; they did n't pretend to believe the man even under oath. A gentlemanly fellow; but who would?"

From all I could learn, in the excitement that followed the painful event, Mrs. Evans flew into a violent passion during her conversation with Archer about the cattle, burst a blood-vessel in the torrent of her wrath, fell at his feet, the blood gushing from her lips upon the well-scrubbed floor, and died! The lawyer rushed for his horse, sending into the house an old negro man who was chopping at the woodpile, no woman being about the place, and put spurs for his — rifle! Not a moment of peace until he has that in his grasp, armed with two revolvers as he already was. Because, having caused the death of the mother, it is of the most pressing importance that he should kill, and at the earliest moment possible, the son also. The entire question, To be or not to be, was with him, To shoot or to be shot. Brown County would very cheerfully have cast a unanimous vote for the last alternative in this case. Odd Archer himself preferred the other, strange as it seemed for even the owner thereof to care for so miserable a life!

With the whole population, Archer included, my interest was henceforth in Mose Evans! Under the circumstances it was impossible to put off the funeral until the arrival of the son, and, Mr. Parkinson officiating, in those indefinite statements to which clergymen are compelled in many a like case, the burial service was duly performed. It was almost enough to cause Mrs. Evans to rise in wrath from her coffin, — the confusion throughout her house, the very abode, during her life, of neatness and housewifely care. All the region round about, male and female, children and grown persons, flocked in to the funeral, bringing upon their feet specimens of all the varieties of mud throughout the county. They pressed to the coffin as if to the side of a panther, if I may so express the actual fact, — a panther long famous but killed at last. And this was the long secluded and dread mother of Mose Evans, he as universally liked as she was feared! No trace, however, of the wild animal — universal disappointment in that — in the face of the dead! A sudden return in the calm visage to something, even, of the girlish beauty, I suppose, which had won the heart of her husband from his books so many years before. Under the reading of the Scriptures and the gen-

eralities of Mr. Parkinson, there fell strange calm upon the crowd. Old New Hampshire led the singing with wonderful success, in virtue of the voices of the many negroes crowding porch and front yard.

We escorted the hearse, an ambulance of Dick Frazier's, stolen, we all knew, from Confederate supplies, to the cemetery in the outskirts of Brownstown; and, with the benediction over the heaped grave, the mind of every person of the crowd dispersing homeward ran into the same demand, "Mose Evans?" The men present would have consented to the hunting up and lynching of Odd Archer, Esq., with the greatest pleasure, if merely for the excitement's sake. But something more than the unpopularity of the deceased prevented that. Somehow, there was a unanimous conviction that the absent son would be anything but gratified thereby. The absent son! I doubt if a person at the grave failed, as he stood there, to say to himself, "Just room between her grave and that live-oak for Mose." I knew the man *had* to be shot as well as any there! I had been quartermaster, compulsory, in the Confederate service during the war, in a certain city, and, while there, had learned a lesson in human nature worth

interrupting my narrative for a moment to repeat. A lady in said city was, or imagined herself to be, insulted by a Mr. Jackson. As soon as her letter detailing the fact arrived, and her husband could get leave of absence from building torpedoes at Savannah, he hurried home and shot his foe. Hastening rapidly across the city to the office of the dead man's only son, who had never even heard of the insult, he shot him also. It is true one of the flying bullets passed through the head, by accident, of a youth of fourteen, the only support of a widowed mother, who happened to be passing. "But then one *has* to be in a hurry at times," Mr. Archer, to whom I narrated the circumstance one day, explained. "When you and the other gentleman are both armed," he continued, "if you have a little difficulty, you are compelled to shoot at the earliest moment, because you know if you don't, he may; best to anticipate him, you observe; procrastination is the thief of time, and something over, in such a case! If you kill your man, of course you must kill his next relative; if you do not, you run the same risk from him; a fool could see that! We may kill a man or so, occasionally," Mr. Archer added, "but, thank Heaven, we do not lie and cheat and steal

and poison people as is done elsewhere!" an emphasis upon the last word making his meaning sufficiently clear.

Mr. Archer would have admitted, however, that I had shown Yankee energy, at least, in my conduct following upon the death of Mrs. Evans. Leaving Brown County in going home from the funeral, I had ridden fifty miles down the river by daybreak of the morning after, to meet and warn Mose Evans on his way home. The truth is, I had come by this time to take an interest in the man, certainly far greater than in any other person native to that region. It was not merely our being thrown together upon matters concerning General Throop's new home, as well as land affairs generally. There was a something in him I find it impossible fully to express by the phrases sincerity, frankness, genuine manliness. I had been used all my life before to people who felt themselves very thoroughly informed in regard to all things in heaven and earth, people who had read books, heard lectures, seen sights; people who, young and old, male and female, were like so many venerable Solomons, aged queens of Sheba, knowing everything, and impervious to surprise. I suppose it was the zest of this ignorant man for

information, the freshness of his pleasure in all I told him of the outside world, as new to him, almost, and as wonderful, as if I was on a visit to him from the sun. But you can find inquisitive ignorance in Africa; it was the original ore of the race in Evans, something of the virgin gold of human nature in eye and tone and smile! I do not know wherein it lay, but General Throop, in his heavier way, was as much interested in him as myself.

And so I went to meet and warn him against Odd Archer, any letter or telegrams being out of the question. It was the noon after the funeral, on Friday, I remember, when I met my friend. He was on his way home from the Port, the money for his cotton in his belt. Just as I arrived he was finishing his dinner on the grass beneath a tree by the road-side, his horse grazing, roped to a swinging vine near by. I had planned, as I floundered along the miry road, what I would say. My well-arranged words were, as is always the case, never once thought of when we met. He rose to meet me, and had the whole story inside of five minutes. As I spoke, he stood listening to me, his full eyes in mine, erect as a statue, passing the palm of his left hand from his lips down his beard

continually while I spoke. Singular contrast of my eager narrative to his quiet attention! I ceased my earnest admonitions as to the need of caution upon his part, — ceased, because they seemed childish before his grave composure. Beyond the first exclamation at meeting, I do not recall his saying a syllable. As I finished, he mechanically drew first one and then the other revolver from its sheath by his side, saw that all the caps were in place, and then put them quietly back, and proceeded to coil in the lariat of his horse, untying it from the vine and hanging the coil by its thong behind the saddle. "Thank you, Mr. Anderson. If you will please ride on a little I will join you after a while," was all he said as he mounted. I confess I was almost angry, after all my most fatiguing ride, too! It was noon when we thus parted, and the night was almost upon me, riding slowly along in advance, before he joined me. I wish I knew whether the man had been weeping! I studied his face as closely as the gathering darkness allowed; there was deep sorrow, the simple bearing of a child in grief, but so little to say, beyond thanking me again for coming! He even asked me one or two questions about General Throop and our land matters. I

mentioned casually that Mrs. Throop had been prevented from attending the funeral, but that General Throop and his daughter had been present. The fact is, to General Throop Mrs. Evans had always been "woman." With myself, as with Brown County, the phrase would have been wildcat, rather! We rode together, now side by side, then one in advance of the other, as the emergencies of the miserable highway allowed, through mud and darkness, and almost unbroken silence at last, until ten o'clock, when we reached the wretched roadside cabin in which we passed the night.

I remember eating ravenously of the pork and corn bread and "big hominy," which, with black coffee, formed our supper that night. In spite of my remonstrance my companion rolled himself up, as soon as supper was ended, in his huge Mexican blanket, and lay down upon the puncheon floor before the wide fireplace, his broad felt hat over his face. I did not hear him make the least motion through the night, and would be glad this hour to know if he really slept during that dismal time. As to myself I was so worn out, that, in spite of pork and coffee, I slept like the dead, — slept, although by some hurry in the making of

the bed, the corn-cobs as well as shucks had been left therein!

"Archer is a gentleman," I said to Evans as we rode along next day, "and he will not fire upon you from ambush. If I was you" — "I think I know exactly what he will do, Mr. Anderson. Excuse my talking so little. I am by myself in the woods so much. I thank you for coming. Heartily. I don't know, but I hope it has saved the man's life. We will see now, any moment."

About four o'clock in the afternoon, our road running beside the very edge of the river, my companion broke the silence as we journeyed along, by drawing up his horse and saying with less excitement than when he had called my duller attention once or twice before to a deer in the woods, —

"Yes, sir. There he is!" dismounting as he said so. I was dreadfully excited, yet nothing could be more chivalrous upon the lawyer's part, for it *was* the lawyer. He had tied his horse to one side and stood in the centre of the road, rifle in hand. I suppose he had taken for granted that his adversary, duly warned, would have had a rifle. To my surprise, as soon as the man saw Mose Evans advancing upon him without one, he deliberately stooped to lay his carefully down upon a dry

tuft of grass beside the way, and then stepped back into the open road, a revolver in either hand, a long knife held by its blade in his teeth. As General Philip Sheridan once told me of one of his battles, "It was beautiful!"

I caught my friend's horse by the bridle, thinking, a little nervously, of Helen and of coming bullets. The parties advanced slowly upon each other, during the whole affair neither saying a single word. When within sixty feet of Evans, Archer raised his revolver and began firing. I heartily wish it was more theatrical, but I can only add that it was all over, ignominiously over, in much less than the proverbial fifteen minutes of the battle of San Jacinto. Mose Evans had not touched his own weapons. At the first report of the lawyer's revolver, he sprang forward! It was as if he was upon his enemy at one bound. Although it ruins what little romance there is in the matter, I believe Evans relied, unconsciously to himself, upon the unsteadiness of Archer's nerves, owing to his habits, in the aim he would take. In the instant he had seized his puny assailant by arm and leg, and hurled him into the river! I laughed aloud like an hysterical woman, — the man flying through the air, the splash in the water, was an ending so sudden; such bathos!

"He won't want to see me. You help him out," my friend said as he remounted. "Tell him the thing 's over. He never *meant* her death, you know. Good afternoon."

Even then, it flashed upon me as Mose Evans rode leisurely away, and I said to myself, I suppose the self-mastery of this child of nature is what he has been learning his life long. In the woods? In his singular home, rather. From his father's long endurance. From witnessing, all his life, his mother's lack of self-control. How Homer would have loved and sung him! Leaving my horse untied, I ran to fish the lawyer out, and a dripping, bewildered, bemuddied wretch he was as he emerged, by my assistance!

I do not understand human nature half as well as I thought I did. I had counted upon his being utterly crestfallen. Not in the slightest! Before he could get water and mire off his face he was laughing and talking as if intoxicated. Possibly he was. Then there was the reaction. Besides, he knew that the circumstances of the case would be known by all Brown County in two days, and that such knowledge would restore him to the good opinion thereof. "Laugh at me?" he asked and answered in a breath; "of course they will! It

will get into the papers and be the joke of the State. Do you suppose I care? Not a red! No, sir. Why, sir, the thing will help elect me next time I run for office. Nothing makes people like a candidate better, yes, and vote for him sooner, than having a good joke upon him!"

X.

Still to th' Archangel doth belong
His power once poured in joy and song,
And service far and swift and strong!
Though downward now his darkling course,
No pulse is slackened at its source!
The same Archangel as at first,
His pathway merely is reversed!

"WHEN I hate a man, he always sickens and dies," my disreputable companion added in irrelevant but unceasing continuation of previous remarks, as we rode into the outskirts of Brownstown. "What I mean," he explained, "is that I am particularly cared for; like Napoleon, I have a star." We had to enter town in our deplorable plight, and were fortunate in not reaching it until dark!

We certainly would have been a sight to see, bemuddied, as we were, from head to foot, and far beyond the ordinary allowance even of that section. I hated it as the worst part of the adventure, having to pass the night with him; but there

was no alternative, and so I dismounted with my associate at the door of the tumble-down house on the edge of the town, which the man called his home, and which he invited me to enter with the well-bred courtesy of a host to his guest, — a courtesy which had, absurd as it may seem, its charm. I did not see him drink anything worse than black coffee while we were there together. And, after eating supper, such as it was, we sat the night through, drying our clothes without taking them off, at the fire which he had hastily made in the desolate fireplace. I dare say it was merely the animal spirits of the man, the most amazing, I believe, I ever knew in any one, Harry Peters excepted; certainly he kept the same afire with the fuel of alcohol, — inferior to Harry Peters, his conversational rival, in that. Under the stimulus that night, possibly, of nothing stronger than escape from his "difficulty" with Mose Evans, his tongue ran like that of one insane. I was glad to sit and listen, if merely to escape getting with him into his one bed.

Yes, all night did we sit there, and you must allow my companion here the same liberty I was compelled to yield him then and there. The fact is, he realized to me much that I had read of

Aaron Burr. I wish you could see the man while you hear him. Slight in build, like his father, the eloquent divine; not without a sinewy grace of carriage and motion; with finely cut features and noble forehead, small but wonderful eyes; a fallen angel, worshiped and very heartily despised by all Brown County. One night some weeks before, General Theodore Throop and myself, seated unknown to him in an adjoining room in Dick Frazier's hotel, listened to his conversation for hours, as, drunk enough for it, he entertained a bar-room of loungers. Wit, wisdom, folly, filth, poetry by the page, deep metaphysics, anecdotes, pathos, bathos, — it was wonderful! Suddenly the General and myself entered the room; the instant shame of the man, the intuitive gesture with which he consigned his companions to the mire beneath his heel, was equally amazing. The greasiness of his shabby suit of black pervaded his entire person; a perfect blackguard, a perfect gentleman! What perplexed me most was that a man with such memories could be so steadily and perfectly happy!

He spoke of his late antagonist at last, as we sat drying ourselves at the fire.

"Mr. Anderson, look here," ran his torrent of

talk; "Mose Evans is certainly a splendid-looking chap, as far as that goes. I do not remember his ever being before the grand jury for stealing, gambling, or anything of the sort; although I do remember his serving both upon grand and petit jury, if only from the fact that he has so invariably found against me in my cases, and in one or two instances more personal. I always challenge him, sir, when offered. His mother was a violent person. The entire country side had looked for it for years when she broke a blood-vessel in that dispute with me about those strayed cattle. I learned, last night, before the boys took him out and hung him for those horses, that Dob Butler *did* steal her cattle as she said; but how was I to know then whether Butler had done as she said? It is very curious, sir; a client may be the hardest of cases, may know it is impossible for you to defend him, know that his lawyer does not care a drink whether the man did the murder, or whatever it was, or not, and yet that client will make believe to the last, against dead evidence and to his own lawyer, that he is innocent! When it is a woman, I do believe, whatever it is she has done, she persuades herself through and through that she did *not* do whatever it was! Yes, sir, if it

was the killing of her baby, or of her old and helpless father, she thinks she had such good and sufficient cause for it that she could not have done otherwise — is an outraged martyr for being troubled about it! I have been a lawyer for years, where human nature shows itself as it is I tell you, and I have learned this of my female clients, they have the least idea of the rights of other people, the clearest sense of their own, of any persons living. Upon the whole, you might have half the money if you gave me a male client instead, if it was not that the woman's lawyer always *has* the jury, yes, sir!" I am obliged to allow the incoherence and lack of punctuation and purpose upon his part, if the reader is to hear Mr. Archer as I heard him that night.

"I do not see," he resumed, "how I have got off the track so. As to Mose Evans? He astonished me as he will the whole county. I half thought, Mr. Anderson, the man an enormous fool. Look here, say, I was one day selecting a pair of boots, on credit, in New Hampshire's store. Miss Throop was shopping at the counter. I had merely bowed to her from the back room, — too much of a gentleman to soil her with shaking hands; what do angels know of what we devils really are!

Evans had retreated into that den of a place with me, when she came in, buying powder I remember he was; went away, at last, leaving the package within a yard of a fire, hickory and sparking! The man was dazed, dared no more look full at Miss Throop than at the noonday sun! But I noticed; we lawyers notice! I saw his eyes fasten, like a hawk upon a chicken, on a piece of brown paper she had unwrapped from some gloves and left lying on a bolt of calico upon the counter. Actually stood there, when she was gone, to gather up that paper in his hand, as cautiously as if it was gold and he stealing, and slipped it into his breast pocket!

"The fool, sir, walked away, leaving that package of powder under the flying sparks! Suppose it had exploded. Why, sir,"— and I noted in the reprobate now, as at all times, the perpetual reference and return he ever made to himself, whatever the topic; as well as the unceasing allusion, running, from force of training, through all his thoughts to things supernatural, — "why, sir, the projectile force of that powder! It would have blown some of us there into heaven, and onward in heaven for ever and ever; one man there in exactly the reverse direction, and forever too. Heh?

Oh, as to Mose Evans, he is — material! I mean for a drama, say. A sort of stuff, deep and strong and very rude, out of which Shakespeare, for instance, could make a hero. Books? I have in Brown County a library of men, and I never weary of reading them instead. Don't get sleepy, Anderson; what shall we talk about next? How will politics do?" And with what inexhaustible spirits the fellow proceeded to rattle on upon that theme! I heard little else all the time I was in that section, yet I appeal to the reader if I have not kept it out of these pages!

"But I would rather hear more in regard to yourself," I said at last, for I was curious about the man.

"About myself?" he replied. "Oh, as to myself. First. I plead guilty to all you, Anderson, all anybody, says against me. More. I am a great deal worse. 'Shysters' I believe lawyers like myself in the great cities are styled. Let us lump it and be done. I, Odd Archer, Esq., Mr. Anderson, stand here up to — down to, rather — anything the lowest lawyers ever do! I want to speak fact about myself as well as about others. I am in that mood to-night. Next. I plead the extenuating circumstance of talent and tempera-

ment. From my birth I was regarded as a cherub. I am not, as you agree, Anderson, angelic in other than an infernal sense, now, but there are miniatures on ivory, — let me be rigidly truthful, *a* miniature on something, — proving my extreme loveliness of eyes, hair, brow, complexion then. If you were to compare child and man you would exclaim, 'Such a harvest from such a seed? It is impossible!' But, the fact shows it *is* possible. More. The very nature of the germ, as in all creation, is the cause of the result. Never mind about my physical beauty. That has a terrible deal to do with my after ruin, but, as is always the case, the very things one cannot say, nor people print, are the chief causes of matters! Matters, sir, perfectly explained by such things, but left otherwise wholly unexplained!

"If any ladies were here to-night," the man continued, rising to his feet, as if from involuntary respect to the very imagination of such presence, "if I dared venture to say such things to the sex, I would remark to them — no, sir, not even in imagination! But as to all this talk about women becoming lawyers, sitting on the jury and the like, I will say it to you, Anderson; will you tell me how it would do to have them in the box, on the

bench, in view of all the ugly matters necessary to be laid before them there? I am told they are going as doctors into dissecting rooms and hospitals, but the loathsomeness of heart and soul laid bare in the court-house is a thousand times worse! Now I am nothing, Mr. Anderson, but a black guard lawyer, yet I can imagine a pure and beau tiful girl, say my sister, or my betrothed. Do you suppose me such a villain as to be able to look her in the soft, innocent eyes, and state and develop and urge the vile facts which make up so many cases in court? If any man, lawyer or otherwise, tried it in the presence of a lady of my acquaintance, I would smash his jaws! I have been forced occasionally, by circumstances, such as the grand jury, judge, and the like, to drop my profession for a time; *that* would make me drop it forever! Yet stop a moment, sir! As darkness ceases only by presence of pure light, this occurs to me, possibly woman's purity *must* come into such close contact with foulest darkness! If the darkness is ever to go! If so, woman's purity must be intensely pure! I do wonder, Anderson, and I never thought of it before, if woman, in virtue of being distinctively woman, is the reserve remedy for the world! You Yankees, sir, laugh at Southern chivalry. It has

gone out, sir, with the Confederacy. Five hundred thousand men were killed in the war. It has thrown up their value too much. Not in the eyes of the other sex alone. We men have come to rate ourselves too high. Now can it be, sir, that with a higher estimate of woman, upon other grounds, a nobler chivalry is to come in? Heh? But, how we have rambled in our talk! Fact is, I'm not a coward, but I'm glad that thing with Evans is over. I see day is breaking. I must have a drink. I will go to Dick Frazier's and have him send your trunk, so that you can dress. It does n't matter about me. What a storm of curiosity and talk there will be over my fight with Evans! You won't see him in town for days. *I* like it! It may elect me to the bench! That Evans, by the bye, has brain enough to go to Congress, if he knew it. For lack of education he is and will be a clod-hopper all his life. What a splendid leap he made on me! I'm glad I did not hit him. I tried my best to do so, I assure you!"

XI.

The minted ores do not compare
With ores that still unminted are;
Nor iron whirring in the wheels
To iron which the earth conceals;
Nor Shakespeare to the Shakespeare stuff,
The race possesses full enough,
True Shakespeare still, though in the rough!

HOWEVER much of an adept I may be in my jotting-down field-notes while riding over our wild lands, and plotting them out accurately afterward for our company, I have no imagination. I dare say it would make me no better as a business man if I had. Any value in what I say lies in simple narration of fact. Take, for instance, a certain rainy day I spent in the store of New Hampshire, my old postmaster, philosopher, and friend. That day forces itself upon my pen; I cannot get past except by recording it. I think it was some three weeks after the funeral of Mrs. Evans and the encounter between Odd Archer, Esq., and her son.

I am making out a map from field-notes for our company, in the back room, but the crowd in the

store increases to such an extent, and the fun becomes so uproarious around Harry Peters, that I give it up. It was for men land was made, and I turn from the lesser to the greater, going in and making myself at home among them upon a soap-box, which affords me also something to whittle at as I sit. My friend the postmaster is the only silent person in the store. I call him my friend, not merely because we are partners in land; somehow, as perfect an understanding exists from the first, between the old gentleman and myself, as between Odd Archer, Esq., and General Throop, our basis being business, theirs mere sentiment. I observe that the postmaster is doing up coffee, the supreme luxury there next to whisky, in pound packages, against a drier and busier day. While he does this he is evidently deep in the interior counties of New England — deaf to all the conversation and laughter, very often quarrels a score strong at a time, and fast and furious, raging around the coast, so to speak, of his placid exterior.

There is Harry Peters as prime promoter of the laughter. He is only a poor planter, limp, lame, weighing under ninety-five pounds, yet Shakespeare was not more entirely monarch of his

adoring friends at a revel than is Harry of his as assembled in the post-office. Odd Archer is present, of course, and as usual, whenever these two are together in a crowd, there is sure to be strong rivalry between them; the lawyer having plenty of talent, stores of knowledge, curve, so to speak, and trick of culture, reinforcement of alcohol, but all in vain against merest nature and genius in his clod-hopping rival. It is, on their lesser scale, Ben Jonson as beaten by Shakespeare.

When I took my soap-box Harry was just finishing some tale of fun. If it was not a recital of the ducking of the lawyer at the hands of Evans, it was something, possibly, more grotesque still, the life of that member of the bar furnishing material ample and ever renewed. The incidents were very ludicrous, whatever they were, and Harry, judging from the effect, could not have told them better to save his life; but, amid all the shouts of laughter, the postmaster steadily puts up his pound packages as if there was not a soul in his store beside the owner thereof. No one addresses himself to my old friend, but I note a peculiar glancing at him, now and then, on the part of all. Something is in hand in reference to him, and I therefore observe more closely, as he is evidently

unconscious of everything but coffee. And, now, Odd Archer launches into a narrative. It is of a peculiarly horrid murder which had come under his knowledge, described with wonderful power, and I forgot everything in the terror and wrath aroused in me as in all there by the narration, in which the lawyer evidently does his best. I observe, in the curdled silence which follows, a curious glancing, yet again, at the keeper of the store. Had he actually been in Brazil at the moment, gathering the coffee from the tree, he would not have been more unconscious of things, so far as the least movement of mouth or eyelid is concerned. After a disappointed pause on the part of the crowd, Harry begins the story of the loss of his children, two little girls and their brother, in the "Bottom." Of course those present know all about it, for it was, the winter before, the sensation of the county, but they listen with hushed eagerness to the wonderfully perfect narration of the father, as he lives over all the anxiety and agony of the mother and himself during those four days. I find myself with moistened eyes, as well as the rest, actually exclaiming aloud with the others when the starved little ones are found! When we recover ourselves enough to do so, I

observe that all eyes are glancing again, although covertly, at the postmaster, so far as outer appearances go as wholly unconscious of them and of all their talk as before. With his little, close-cropped, white head on one side, he is putting up bags of coffee, that and only that!

I understand why Odd Archer had stepped over to Dick Frazier's for a drink, when he begins again, with renewed energy. It is an assault upon the Bible, cool, argumentative, very able indeed at first, quickening into bitter, blasphemous, ferocious fury as he proceeds. I had heard before that of all men a minister's son, when wicked, had the greatest power of blasphemy known, an energy of moral effect therein terrifying the weaker among his wicked associates; because the entire belief and meaning derived from previous training is put into the oaths! By this time I have come of myself to understand that, by plan beforehand, regular assault has been made, for the last two or three hours, upon old New Hampshire; heavy bets pending, I afterward learn, upon moving him to do or say something, show in any way some emotion! The frantic violence of the lawyer as he ceases shows his consciousness of defeat. The old man has paused once or twice from scoop and

scales and coffee sack, even looked full in the face of the reprobate while at the white heat of his harangue, but it was exactly as if the lawyer was not there at all: the pause was merely to tap his forefinger over his pursed-up lips, as, with eyes closed now and then, he was calculating profits, I suppose, his head to one side.

Odd Archer ceases, exhausted, and universal laughter and scoffing sets in at the defeat of the two champions. It is "in full blast," according to Brown County parlance, but there is instant hush thereof, and all movement, even, arrested, as Agnes Throop suddenly enters the door from the rain, and stands at the counter asking for letters. What heavenly beauty and purity and grace! Nothing but a simply dressed young lady, with shrinking eyes, and cheeks in which the soul comes and goes, yet these men are painfully aware on the instant that they are scoundrels, boobies, louts! Every man, as soon as he recovers himself, manages to slip away. In ten minutes every soul of them is gone, really kicked out of her presence, and by himself! I tarry by her side, heartily ashamed of my previous company, with the usual salutations; but I curiously note that the postmaster is no more moved by the presence of this

perfect jewel of her kind than he was by the men who have gone. As I pass out of the door on my way to the hotel, I notice that Miss Agnes has come to town in a buggy which waits for her at the sidewalk. Mary Martha Washington, who has driven her young mistress in, acknowledges my good-day with severe respect, bringing to my mind her confidences to my wife long before in Charleston.

"I was trained, Miss Helen, to believe the Bible is God's Word. If I know anything, it is that it is clear agen the abolitionists. Two things I never *can* stand, abolitionists an' free niggers. I 'm too old now, to change! I *can't* give up my religion!"

"I was taught, Henry, as this old aunty was," my wife took occasion to explain at the time; "and slavery *was* no sin at all. But the Bible nowhere commanded us to hold slaves; no necessary connection between the two whatever."

"My dear Helen," I made reply, "a century or so ago one of the godliest ministers of New England sent a barrel of rum over to Africa and obtained a slave therefrom in exchange. No argument for the divine life of Revelation more self-evident than the way in which, slow and silent and steady, yes, and omnipotent and irresistible as God

who gives it, the gospel purifies itself, age after age, from the merely human elements incrusting but wholly separable from it; elements which are part of the gospel only as my clothing for the nonce is part of me. No more, I should rather say, than as the hindering vapors of our atmosphere are part of the sun. Plenty more of the human to be purged away yet from our skies, but I do not think it will endanger the sun!"

All this, however, is purely incidental. In the moment of speaking to the colored woman seated in the buggy, I observe Mose Evans standing off by himself near the door of the office through which Miss Throop has entered a few moments before. I turn to shake hands and say a few words about business. To my surprise he takes my hand mechanically, but seems scarcely to recognize me, although his eyes are in mine when he speaks; for that is a peculiarity of Mose Evans, the putting his entire self into his eyes full in yours when he addresses or listens to you. Hence I say to myself as I leave him, I wonder if the man can be drunk? But, looking back after I have gone a little distance, I see that he has walked steadily enough to his horse tied to the rack across the street, and is in the act of mounting. Then all

that old Mr. Robinson had told me flashed upon my mind! Agnes Throop! The absurdity, stupidity, insanity of the man! I have to stop once or twice before I reach Dick Frazier's to think over what Mr. Robinson had said, I had so promptly and utterly rejected it all at the time! "I thought I understood human nature!" I complain to myself. "Yes, but this is the very sublimity of — of" —

XII.

"Thou fool, the seed" — how rings the cry —
"Is quickened not except it die,
Except it die! Except it die!"

I HASTEN to speak of the next time I saw Mose Evans. I am, in fact, eager to do so. The circumstances were so remarkable.

Some months had rolled by since the day I had seen him hesitating, as if in a dazed condition, at the door of the post-office. I had gone back to New York and Charleston since then. After settling up certain business there, I was on my way back again to Brown County, accompanied by Helen, my wife, who this time positively refused to be left behind. And thus it happened she was with me that day I reached Bucksnort, a particularly unpleasant town, at the hotel in which our stage stopped on its way to Brownstown. It was in that hotel we found Mose Evans, and in what condition!

I recall perfectly how we came to know of it. Helen and myself had arrived an hour or so before

supper. While seated thereat, the stage arrived from Brownstown, and the hungry passengers poured in upon us, seated at the supper table. I noticed the lawyer, Odd Archer, among the rest, and very drunk. I do not know whether he recognized me, but it would have made no difference. I suppose it was a continuance of what had been going on in the stage before, but I observed that he, in a drunken way, forced the possession of the seat next a modest-looking country girl, one of the passengers, nearly opposite Helen and myself. Even before the touch of Helen's elbow, I fancied the animal was insulting the shrinking girl, who was too diffident to do more than draw as far away from him as possible. I hesitated to believe that the man could have degenerated so rapidly from what I had known him to be in reference to women, as to be guilty of any disrespect to a female even in his deepest drunken degradation. A fleshy old man who had come with them was seated at my side. As he was whispering to me, "I would not notice him. He 's been drunk all along," I observed a gross insult toward the girl upon the part of the lawyer. I grasped a tumbler of milk to hurl it, and was grasped in the same moment by my own cooler sense in the person of

Helen, my wife, barely in time! How very much better! A whisper on my part to the negro handing me the wholly indigestible biscuits, a hasty exit of the same, the hurried appearance of the landlord, himself guilty of worse things every day. Sober during that special half hour, so as to make no mistake in taking the money for supper, the landlord saw the situation at a glance, and was filled with virtuous wrath! One good grasp upon Odd Archer's collar from behind, and he had dragged him off his seat to the side door, and hurled the limp wretch like a half-filled bag of meal out of the entrance and far into the night! It is often so much better to have certain things done for you by others than to do them yourself! You can remain quiet, and they can do them so much more thoroughly, too! And but for this, I should not have known Mose Evans was in the house; would have gone on to Brownstown,—Mose Evans to another city, too, quite another, neither Brownstown nor yet Charleston! It was from the landlord, after thanking him, supper over, for his conduct, that, in the course of conversation, I learned Mose Evans was up-stairs.

"Mighty sick, Colonel Anderson, I tell you!" The colonel being instant brevet for my thanks;

and my friend wiped the honest sweat of his late exertion from his exceedingly red face, as he told me this, hearkening, with his bushy head a little on one side, for any groans from the direction in which the ejected man had disappeared through the night, as assurances that he had not been actually killed by his fall from the battlements of light.

Yes, there in the corner of an upper room lay Mose Evans! Wrecked like some huge Spanish galleon, and upon the most dismal and desert of all inhospitable islands! Too short and too narrow, at least for him, the unpainted bedstead creaked and threatened to tumble at every turn of the writhing sufferer; its cords so loose that the thin mattress bulged downward to the floor; no possibility of lying in it unless coiled up like a serpent in a bushel measure. Although the sick man is consuming with fever, no one has thought to lift a window to assuage his burning, by letting in the at least milder fever of midsummer which is upon the world without; has not cared, even, to move the bed out of the corner between two walls without a window. And there lay my poor friend with hair, beard, parched lips, delirious brain, a St. Lawrence upon his gridiron; rather, a soul in hell for the pencil of Doré and the pen of Dante!

But, in God's mercy, there is ever a Beatrice, too, for sufferer as for poet. I had, of course, told my wife the whole story long before, so that I had but to take her into the room and say, "Helen, dear, Mose Evans!" for her to understand the entire affair. She had entered the western wilds with me, burning silently for some opportunity to show how heartily she could do and endure toward the making with me there of the immense fortune in lands which I had in view.

I must add that, largely to her clear intuition in business, we have done, by the bye, very well indeed, ours being considerably more than the six feet by two of soil usually assigned by moralists, with the three-score and ten of years, to mortals.

Amazing, the despotism of a young and lovely woman, especially if in the interest of the sick! In two hours Helen had revolutionized this "Bucksnort Travelers' Rest," as our Hotel was misnamed. Such obedience our landlord, rapidly returning to his condition of normal drunkenness, had never shown to his pale-faced and miserable wife. The two or three pert mulatto women about the hotel sufficiently explained, apart from the drink, the pallor and emaciation of the nominal mistress of the house. Wives have like expe-

riences the world over, but I dare not say a syllable here as to the effect upon a Southern wife of a negro concubine; yet I will record how I loathed that Helen should even superintend the labors of such helpers for the sick man! But she did not know; and at last we had the sick man bathed, clothed in clean linen, with hair and beard combed, upon the best bed in the coolest corner of the only decent room in the house, — our own; and in consequence, he was soon sweetly asleep. "He looks like a dying lion, Henry," my wife whispered, as we rested at last by his bed. "Say a wounded gladiator," she continued. "A woman might envy him those masses of beautiful hair. But, have you not romanced a little about him?"

"Listen to the simple facts," I said, "and see if it is not nature itself, like Chevy Chace and the Vicar of Wakefield!" and I went over again the story of his parentage, utter seclusion in the woods, amazing ignorance, termagant mother.

"Ah, Henry, it is his desperate falling in love with Agnes Throop which interests you so in him, and I don't blame you!" said my wife. "I dare say she was to him as the first European woman was to the savages of America when she landed. Ever read, dear, that old story of Inkle and Ya-

rico? The amazement of wonder and love with which the savage girl adored and clung to the god in flesh from Europe?"

"Yes, and, if I am only a land agent, I remember, too, that the god was a dastardly scoundrel, sold the girl"—

"Never mind about the rest," Helen adds hastily. "As to Agnes Throop, you are right; the thing is too preposterous even for romance, the man is deranged. Agnes Throop! And such a person as this! Insanity! Besides, you forget there is another lover, 'a priory attachment,' as Mr. Weller said."

"Yes, Mr. Archibald Clammeigh," although I doubt if that gentleman would care to be announced to an audience, say, as the next speaker, in exactly the tones in which his name was now mentioned.

And so we sat comparing the two men in silence. I dare say the long and singular suffering of the one lying before us helped our illusion, for such a colossus comes down with a crash when it does fall. The poor fellow was sadly reduced in flesh. Of course it was all imagination on our part that the traces of suffering upon his face were softened by a purity and patience greater still.

Romeos and King Lears, Cordelias and Ophelias, never had, you know, any more existence than the Ariels and the Pucks! Or, if they did have, they have gone out forever with Shakespeare and stage-coaches. Or, is it so?

"But, you observe," I thought aloud to Helen after a little, "that is the trouble with this poor fellow. He has never lived in Mobile, or wintered at the Pulaski House in Savannah, to say nothing of the lesser civilization of Fifth Avenue, or Boston. The man," and I pointed to him as if he were that far off, "actually lives in the age of — Elizabeth? Why, Helen, he is a contemporary of Abelard. For anything he ever saw, or knew, I do not see why Mose Evans is not of the age of Achilles, even Abel." I frankly confess here that I did garnish my conversation when with my wife more freely from such reading as I have had than I thought expedient generally and elsewhere. She liked such things, you observe, at least I supposed so: one should not be forever and everywhere merely a land agent.

"It is all because you think he is so desperately in love, dear," she now replied, "nor, even then, would he seem so much to others. We have n't been long married, you know!" She said it, but did n't mean it, of course, my wife.

"And Mr. Archibald Clammeigh, we are under no illusion as to him, genial, generous soul of honor that he is!" I say. "What a singular coincidence, the conflict of two such opposites for such a woman," I add, saddened by the moan of the sleeping man. "Everything," I continued, after a pause, "birth can do for a man has been done for his Grace the Duke of Clammeigh; no birth at all, hardly, in the case of this hap-hazard native of the wilds. Thorough education, and no education. European travel, and never out of a cypress swamp. All that wealth and society can do for the one, and this man as ignorant of civilization even as Hercules!" I lower my voice, under the finger of Helen laid on my moustache, to add, "I may be romantic, being lately married and to a witch, but, think of Agnes Throop, of her Charleston betrothed, and—look at this man!" Because, there *was* that in Mose Evans which deeply impressed us! As to Mr. Clammeigh, he would have passed out of my mind like the dead, had he not been our company's Charleston lawyer. But it was his relation to Agnes Throop which brought him, at this singular juncture, so vividly to mind.

At this moment the invalid stirs, moans, murmurs, without opening his eyes.

"Cologne, if you please."

"Can you guess why?" I whisper to my wife as she bathes with cologne brow, hair, beard; "the silliest thing in the world!"

"Agnes?"

"And he had never even heard of it before."

"How do you know?"

"As *you* know it! The mother in me, I suppose."

But here the Bucksnort doctor enters the room, bringing an aroma of whisky and tobacco. He has heard of matters, and is a little awed by the change of things, in the scrupulously dignified stage of intoxication. From him we learn that Mose Evans has been sick three weeks, consumed by fever, would not take the physic, not the least hope now of his recovery.

I could not but be struck, as the doctor spoke, with one thing which I had observed often before: here was a regularly educated physician, and, I dare say, from the East years before, yet he had fallen into the jerky dialect of the region as completely as had Dob Butler, or Odd Archer, Esq. I sometimes fear my long association out there with such people has affected even my manner of speaking. But then, you know, Paris has its

peculiarity of speech, so has Edinburgh, possibly Boston.

"Has he talked much in his delirium?" I ask. The bloated Galen looks at me with curiosity, and replies, "Not one word! Can you explain it? Old friend, I see. It relieves nature, talking does, like weeping, for instance. Not one word! So much the worse for him! Very remarkable case! The man evidently has some trouble, but has bottled himself up, hermetically sealed himself! I wonder what it *is?* Killed somebody, I suppose! Humph! He 'll soon be out of the reach of the law, or Judge Lynch!"

I assure the doctor, as we converse, after a while, in the hall outside the room, that he is mistaken in his conjectures, as I tell Helen afterward that I will myself make the doctor false in his prophecies! Please Heaven!

"I said he did not talk, I mean about himself. One queer, very queer insanity he had," the doctor proceeds to inform me, and the remembrance seems to sober him a little. "He got some of the young fellows hanging round to read his Bible to him when he first lay sick. Grown man, fine-looking man like him, and I suppose can't read" — great contempt.

Simple truth obliges me to repel this last assertion. Months ago Mose Evans had acquired that useful art, and had been engaged a goodly part of every day, as well as far into the night, in devouring, as the old postmaster told me, all the grammars, geographies, histories New Hampshire could obtain for him from the East by mail. Giving to the work the energies of manhood, as well as an intellect far beyond the average, it was incredible, old New Hampshire told me, the progress he made. The sick man had his visitors read to him for *their* benefit; even had he been strong enough for the exertion, they would have howled at the suggestion of having the Bible read to them by him, or by any other man.

"Preachers are scarce articles in this region!" the doctor continued. "It was very kind in the young fellows to read the Bible to him. They got so ashamed of it at last, however, everybody laughed at them so, you know, that they could not stand it, gave it up! And that poor fellow would persist in saying his prayers, sometimes kneeling in his bed when he could not get up, clasping his hands over his beard so, and saying them to himself when he could n't kneel even in his bed. The room had always been full of men smoking, play-

ing cards, before, to keep him company, you see. Oh, they left; could n't begin to stand it!"

"Was that his insanity?"

"Not so much *that*. This. He made me promise him I would let him know in time before he died. 'What for?' I asked, after I had promised. 'You are a hard set about here,' he said. 'I know you won't care for anything I can say now.' I do believe," the doctor added, "the man's intention was to have in all the people about the place and give them a regular sermon. Singular notion, was n't it? Actual fact, sir!

"The only way I can explain it," the doctor continues, opening, as he speaks, the door of the room across the hall from which we had rescued Mose Evans, "is that it was in this room, his room till you moved him, that it all took place!"

"What took place?"

"You have n't heard? Why, this! There had been a wonderful time of it at a camp-meeting out of town, ever so many of the boys up at the altar. Some of the men here said it was time to stop it. So they held a regular sacrament service in this room, singing, praying, preaching, tobacco for the bread, whisky for the wine, just for deviltry! At the close of it, the make-believe par-

son's revolver went off by accident, shot the next man through the heart! He was laughing when he fell, and the bother was, they could n't get the laugh out of his face! A laughing corpse in his coffin! It broke that crowd up quicker than any benediction *you* ever heard. It was the day your friend got here. I suppose he meant that! Only, he was crazy from fever and his trouble, whatever it is. But won't you go down town and take a drink? The water about here is limestone, and will be sure to derange your bowels; come!"

To a degree wholly beyond my control, my experiences were, as you have been pained to observe, chiefly among the lower elements of the Southwest at that day. If you suppose, therefore, that the same are other than the weaker and lesser, as well as worse, portion of the population there, you are greatly mistaken. No more cultivated and thoroughly excellent people in every sense, than are to be found even in the Brown Counties of the Southwest; pure jewels, the brighter for their very setting, in many cases. I have had wide experiences, and must add that, if driven to choose between the log-cabin and the brown stone front for sterling goodness, I regard myself as safest in selecting, like Portia's lover, the less imposing casket of the array.

XIII.

The boomerang th' Australian sends,
The bomb which to its zenith tends,
The stream which to Niagara flows,
The wind which into cyclone blows,
Like comets at per'helion swerved,
All Force at last is duly curved;
And, rounded as is life from sleep,
Its utmost energy doth keep
Returning from elliptic sweep!

HELEN agrees with me when we talk over those days at the Bucksnort Hotel, as we often do, that it was the most remarkable thing we ever knew! You are thoroughly informed in regard to Ignatius Loyola lying wounded to death in his tent, with his volumes of the Lives of the Saints? Well, you know what came to him, and to the world up to date, of that! Joan of Arc among her sheep, Mohammed in his cave, are but the same story over again. So of the remarkable revolution in this Titan of ours, this prehistoric savage. I abhor mere rhetoric, but I would like to speak, if I could, of the soul of this child of nature, seething and surging in him, as fresh and wild and forceful

as did the conflicting elements of chaos when God first began to move upon it. The fact is, the awakened nature of the man had so wrought upon his body, even, that the backwoodsman was but a huge infant, exhausted as by crying — for the individual in question is too matter-of-fact to be at all rhetorical about! I do believe another day, possibly hour, and Helen and myself would have been too late. But we understood him, handled him, saved him as a mother would a child! May I be allowed to remark that we have both had, in consequence, a firmer faith than before, in a providence as special to us as is our care toward and over our little children.

"The boys there at Brownstown used to say old New Hampshire was so mean he'd weaken his well water before he'd give a feller a drink, and it was a lie: well, I'm as weak as *that* water!" Mose Evans said to us, as his good morning, about ten days after we had taken him in hand. "Take a patent as a scarecrow, heh?"

And he *was* a sight to see! Like all his comrades out West, wont to sleep on the prairie, or upon a blanket spread out on the puncheon floor of the cabin before the fire, Mose Evans used no pillow or bolster — lay perfectly flat upon his

back in bed; a cause, by the bye, of his erect carriage and open chest, some of us narrow-breasted men and women would do well to remember. Very prostrate he was, the yellow beard flowing like an inundation over the blanket drawn up, out of respect to Helen, to the chin. Set like a picture in the mass of hair and beard, his emaciated face — eyes large and hollow, brow broad and white — resembled rather some medallion of a former age. "I am alive!" It was gravely announced by him that morning after certain hopeful salutations and suggestions on our part. "I intend to live! I am going to get well. I am going to live more than I ever did before. You will see." It was not merely the child-like gravity of the statement. I am far from denying that Mose Evans was grateful to Helen and myself. I do not remember his saying so, we all took it for granted. But there was this as part of the amazing change in the man since I had last seen him. He had been simply an intelligent, kindly disposed Newfoundland dog when General Throop and myself had first met him, long before, at his cabin and elsewhere about Brownstown. You would have had the idea of him then as of a magnificent ox that would not hook. Once or twice

General Throop had rested his rifle, for the General's hands trembled those days a good deal, upon Mose Evans' oaken shoulder to shoot, when we were out early of mornings after wild turkeys, and he was nothing on earth but a log, a walking stump, to us and to himself then, at best merely "noble material for the making of a man," as the General had often remarked to me. Then! not now!

"Old New Hampshire often talked to me that way," Mose Evans continued, the morning of our conversation with him, but without a particle of explanation. "Not when any of the boys were about. No. When I sat on a nail-keg by his counter, Saturday nights, every soul drunk and gone home. He had his little bit of a Bible in an old desk of his in the back room. Boys called that room New England, — fully as big, they said. That Saturday night special! Yes, locked up and had me back there! Never laughed in his life, they say. How that old man's tears did run down, that night! Hailstorm? Yes, he can pray some. Two good miles, if the wind lies, or is in your direction, they say. The postmaster only whispered. But it sounded to me louder than Hailstorm!"

"Don't you think you are talking too much? You know you are very weak. You can say all you like another time." It is Helen's soothing suggestion. And let me uncover part of this photograph by adding, for what it is worth in the interest of simple truth, Mose Evans had eaten his breakfast just before! Lest that is not understood, I will add that breakfast meant, with Mose Evans, coffee! Coffee, without milk, and more cups than I like to say. As in every cabin in his region, Mose Evans's old black and battered coffee-pot never was cold day or night, the year around. Vilely inhospitable the meanest there, if they did not offer you a tin cup of coffee before you had been in the cabin or camp twenty minutes. Oriental hospitality in two senses of the word. It strikes me as a question here whether coffee had anything to do with the death of Mose Evans's old schoolmaster of a father; with the terrible temper and final bursting of a blood-vessel on the part of his mother? I do not know. Nor do I know whether it affected Mose Evans in his feeling and talk that day. I only mention it as a part of the evidence for the jury, as a lawyer would say. Coffee, too, is one of the implements made by Infinite Love for its uses, as much so as wheat.

"'You get converted, Mose, and get New Hampshire's property,' the boys said," our patient continued, paying attention only by resting his hollow eyes upon my wife's face whenever she spoke; and then, turning them away, he persisted in looking toward the future, and altogether over our heads. "They were mistaken! What did I want of his money? What did I want to buy? Land? It belongs to me now up and down the river so far I never even try to stop people splitting their rails off of it, making their clapboards, and the like; squatting on it, for all I know. Stock? I never get a chance, even with my brand, at half my colts or calves. Nothing I wanted out of his money, that *I* know of! Then, I mean.

"Strange how it all came, like Muscadine grapes, in a bunch," our sick man continued after some minutes of thought. "There is Mr. Parkinson. My father, too, *he* must have talked to me when I was a child. Pre-haps. And Hailstorm. Only there was too much thunder for the lightning. Then he always cried so at the end, washed you away like, a fellow would run for shelter. Little I could understand of Mr. Parkinson when I first knew him. He was like that fool, Alex

Jones, with his doctor's talk, every word a yard long. Green from their school, both of them. I managed to understand as he got warm, toward the close, moonshine done and day come. When he stopped preaching, began talking to me, I could understand. I do believe that parson went hunting with me, camping out at night on purpose. Never mind about all that!" I had never heard the man talk as much in all our intercourse before. It may have been his physical weakness, the transition state, the desperate emergency of the poor fellow!

"And, then" — Mose Evans got so far after a silence, only to stop. You will say I write romance, a thing I detest. Suppose you had seen the color suffusing his face, the light breaking in his eyes and over his entire manner as he lay there, the man so small yet so large!

"Then, she came." Helen said it for him after a pause. "Agnes Throop. I have known her for years," my wife added. "And, although Agnes is a lovely girl in some respects, I do not believe in her as some people do!" Quietly and firmly. I suppose Helen said it as a medicine. Sincerely thought it, for no woman is deluded about any other than a man. The Martha of Goethe was no

more infatuated about Margaret than was Mephistopheles.

"Yes, ma'am, she came," Mose Evans said after a long pause. I cannot describe tone or manner. It would have hurt Helen if it had not amused her so, the man's utter folly, that her eyes filled with tears of pity, respect, affection, for the sick simpleton! In Agnes, Helen felt it was her sex this Scandinavian of thousands of years ago so adored. The woman's eyes rested a moment on me, saying, Ah, Henry, if you but believed in me like that! But then, I am of this nineteenth century. I have business that drives me like a mule from morning to midnight, — occupies my time so. This Mose Evans had nothing whatever to do, had no more idea of time than people had in earlier ages, than a Bedouin has now. And it was his first love.

"Yes, she came, ma'am." A contempt for all my wife could say or know of Agnes Throop, as he repeated the words, which was simply perfect.

If there had not been a sort of grandeur as matter of course as morning in it, I declare I would have been irritated at the way in which this man ignored Helen and myself! Had Helen and myself been but a brace of babies, he, lying upon his bed, could not have had less reference to us in all

his words and manner. The man spoke, felt, certainly afterward acted, as from depths in himself with which we had nothing to do. There was a look in his eyes as entirely over our little heads and far away as if we were weeds about his feet!

"It all came together," he added after a while. "I was, before it all — What was I? I was like a bear asleep all winter in a hollow tree. Worse. Never mind, it all happened together, like spring! Old New Hampshire. Mr. Parkinson. Perhaps my mother's going; I never thought of that before. *I* never knew there was a world we are going to live in after this!" turning his eyes upon us, with peculiar emphasis upon the I; "a real, sure enough world after this, and one that 's going to last for ever and ever. An actual, sure enough God, a real person, mind, like you and me. Greater, of course, than us, as the sky is greater than a prairie. I never once thought of such a thing! As to what they tell me that God Almighty did, coming into this world on purpose for such a thing, say, as I was, living here, dying here — never mind! That is just the thing I can't talk about, for one. But, it was the finding *myself* out, as well as Him, I look at! It is the coming all on a sudden to know who I am! What I

may be yet, here in this world. And in that other world for ever and ever! This man, *me!*" and he lifts his eyes solemnly to us, quietly pressing his hand, already lying there, upon his bosom as he speaks.

"My dear Mr. Evans," my wife endeavors. "If you talk so much you will have brain fever again. You are as weak as water; you said so yourself. Do stop and go to sleep a little."

"Let me tell you, ma'am," Mose Evans said, slowly, after listening with his large eyes. "Once, — why that is another of the things that came together. I 'd clean forgot it! About a year ago, a tree fell on me. At night. I had cut it down for the bear in the top. It pinned me down in between some rocks, no man with me, nor like to be. I was held down flat, could n't stir, like I am in this bed. My mind was that much the more quick. I thought more and brighter than for years, all in the six hours before Harry Peters happened along, going to a wedding in the Bottom. I know I am — as weak! But if ever I had horse sense, it is to-day. Oh, well, I won't talk. But I have laid out on the prairie August nights, a coal or so of fire down in a hole by me, and my coffee-pot on that, for fear of drawing Ca-

manches, — laid flat on the grass looking up at the skies, thinking what a tre-mendous creation it is, who made and keeps it going, all He did and is doing for me, who I am and what I may yet be! And then, yes, she came! I had been months studying such matters, never dreamed of anything of the kind before. That Sunday at church, the day Hailstorm preached. I was sitting there! I 'd no more idea! She was coming in. I looked up just as a horse would do from his trough. The moment I saw her she — she *proved* it all!"

It is a pity, the reader may have said before this, that the Mr. Anderson who tells us this story could not make his fiction more probable. How is it possible, you say, that a man born and living all his life in a swamp, and unable to read, could use the language put in Evans's mouth? Mr. Parkinson, Helen, and myself have discussed that objection, for the manuscript has been read aloud at my house of evenings, while Mr. Parkinson was East soliciting money for his church in Brownstown. We have altered and corrected our statements in so many ways, to secure even verbal exactness, as to weary me to death, for one, of the whole undertaking. In the very nature of the case we did not take down the exact syllables from

the lips of any of the parties of this simple narrative. Yet we have put their meaning, their intent, in words as near those they used as we can remember!

But how little can you, reader, understand of Mose Evans lying there, not seeing his face, hearing his voice. I cannot help if facts seem improbable to you because I am not Dickens in the delineation thereof. As a commonplace man of the world I will say this, however, that I, who personally knew Mose Evans, understand better than before the revolution befalling, say, Luther in his cell. Heaven uses not coffee nor wheat nor the other agencies to which I alluded merely, it uses every one of us for some purpose; why not this Agnes Throop, as a force silent as that of the magnet, if you say so, for the lifting of this inert mass of a man? I do not think that the run of a year's transaction, of our land company, for instance, either embraces or explains the entire universe. Things happen! The life of Saul of Tarsus before and after proves that something must have taken place during his trip to Damascus, — something out of the common! Poor Sir John Falstaff, to change the illustration exceedingly, learned whether or no Prince Hal's coming to the crown

left said Prince as he was before; some change between Gadshill and Agincourt! I did not mean to tire you with all this; surely you have known instances convincing you that a man is capable of a revolution, as well as France.

"Mr. Evans" — my wife begins, during the conversation from which I have wandered.

"Mose Evans," that invalid corrects her, very respectfully.

"Mr. Mose Evans, I want you to listen to me," my Helen proceeded to say with the firm sweetness which will characterize, I suppose, the entire faculty of woman physicians and surgeons coming in.

"Yes, ma'am." For the patient is perfectly powerless, big as he is.

"I do not want to pain you," my wife proceeds, "but my husband here has told me the whole story of your infat — your fool — your mistake. So far, I mean, of course, as Miss Agnes Throop is concerned. A great, strong man like you should be ashamed of yourself! If this goes on it will derange, or kill you. I would not be a baby if I were you! Now I want to cure you. I can cure you of your madness. But you have talked too much to-day. We will speak about it again to-

morrow, when you are stronger. Good-by, now. Come Henry."

"As you please, ma'am," our sick man says, we rising to leave, and says it very composedly.

"It is positively provoking!" Helen remarked to me that afternoon in our own room, when I had come in from a little business I had down street. "That Mose Evans of yours is a perfect fool! Agnes Throop is no more an angel than I am. *I'll* cure him! But it provokes me, how set he is in his ignorance. Did you notice how cool he was when we left, as if it did not matter what I could say?"

XIV.

He journeys to Damascus Saul,
He journeys from Damascus Paul!
Yet all his days the man is twain;
Both Saul and Paul he doth remain.
"Oh wretched man!" from each he flies —
"Who shall deliver me?" he cries;
A dual man until he dies!

SINCE that night when our landlord flung Odd Archer from the supper-room, he had passed as completely out of my mind also as he then had out of the door. When my wife and myself came from Evans's room, after our conversation just recorded, the door of the apartment immediately across the hall, and from which we had rescued our poor friend, happened to stand open, and I caught passing sight of some one in the same bed from whose slough Evans had been plucked; and at the same moment a well-known voice exclaimed, —

"I say, Anderson! Colonel Anderson!" for I had every grade of title out West, according to my standing with the person speaking. So, let-

ting Helen pass on, I halted a moment in the doorway. Merely the tip of his dissipated nose appearing among the disordered bed-clothing, — Odd Archer, of course!

"You here?" I demanded.

"Had a fall. Arm broken. As if you did not do it!" the lawyer remarks.

"I do it?"

"So the landlord tells me. You might have known I was not responsible. Threw me out of the room. The landlord tells me he was too late to stop you. What was it?"

Without replying, I went below in search of said master of the house. It was of no use. He was but beginning to sober with view to supper money from the coming stage. Besides, I passed his pallid wife on the stairs, and had neither heart nor revolver for any "difficulty" with the man. And the landlord was, in a sense, but telling the truth; he had been but the tongs, so to speak, with which I had disposed of the obnoxious individual. I had no intention at all, when I left his room, of seeing Archer again, but, on second thought, it does not do for a man in business to cut himself utterly off from any other man about him whatsoever. There is no telling, in reference

even to the most despicable or insignificant person living, but that, and at any moment, he may become, in the rapid and unexpected complications of business, a dangerous enemy or a powerful friend. Much, too, as I detested the miserable scamp, for my soul I could not help liking him.

"You did perfectly right," he said that same night, when I had told him the facts of his conduct. "A woman! And in the presence of your wife! I deserved all you did, sir, and more, though I would rather you had done what you did with your own hands. They put so *much* strychnine in the whisky, General Anderson! A woman! And unprotected! I was deranged. No, sir, you could not have done otherwise. I knew the landlord lied, or I would not have called you, — would have shot you as soon as my arm had healed. Very strange, how pervasive you Northern people are! You were present when Mose Evans had that difficulty with me, you remember. Permeating! Pervasive! Now the bars of slavery are down, I suppose you Yankees will New Englandize the continent!"

"Certainly! We landed at Plymouth to do that. And we intend to hammer and shape America according to our notion, that we may rev-

olutionize, with this republic, the whole world!" I replied, for the vivacity of the man was infectious. Are the springs of his unwearying, inexhaustible happiness in his body or mind? I asked myself. It was phenomenal that this wretch, who should be the most miserable of men, was always as radiant, to outer appearance, at least, as an angel! There he lay, battered, bruised, burned out by alcohol, undermined in his very marrow by debauchery; possessing hardly a penny in the world, certainly not a friend who would give a copper to have him live; blasted in every memory of the past, with no gleam of hope for the future; yet his rat-like eyes were glittering with joy as well as life! I know no more, at last, of human nature than I do of Sanskrit! It takes the Being who made the heart, the most wonderful of all his worlds, to understand it!

How the man rattled on! He did not care in the least which way the conversation turned. "Yes," he said, after speaking upon almost every other topic, falling back at last, as he invariably did, in the end, upon himself and his own experiences. "I was a remarkable child. I told you so before. You know the children of distinguished ministers always are more bright, petted, accus-

tomed to society, than average children. The trouble with me was that my father, being so very distinguished as the pastor for thirty years of a leading city church, was too much a great divine to be a father at all. A purer-hearted, more unselfish, more affectionate, more perfectly exemplary man, even in his securest privacy, never lived. But what time did he get, do you suppose, Anderson, to be a parent? The tinkle of his door-bell was almost as unceasing as that of a sleigh in mid-winter. What a Noah's Ark our house was! Book agents; people in the pressing interest of a hundred societies; persons coming to be married, and, at least by the proxy of their friends, to be buried; husbands requiring a ten minutes' conversation, lasting an hour, to the effect that if their pastor did not see and talk to their wives, they could stand it no longer, and there must be a separation; and wives, staying twice as long, to urge the same, with floods of tears, about their husbands. Young men in reference to young ladies — stop! I bear in mind perfectly a young lady who laid before my father, never noticing me playing dominoes under the parlor table, this case in regard to her betrothed: 'John wanted me last night to lay my hand on

our parlor Bible, and solemnly make oath that I loved him. Now, my dear pastor' (I remember, Anderson, what a modest, beautiful, lady-like girl she was, and how eagerly she looked at my father through her tears, her veil on one side), 'dear Dr. Archer, my mother is dead, and pa don't care; *ought* John to ask me that? He knows I love him with all my heart, but he says he cannot marry me unless I will *swear* I do! I never swore in my life! Child as I was, the embryo lawyer in me was aware it was only a trick of the scoundrel to get off from his engagement because her father had lost money, or he had found a richer girl!" and here Mr. Archer paused, only to begin again. "When a man has a household, Anderson, of two thousand souls, — *souls*, mind, — and has to fit them for eternity as well as for time, how can he devote himself to his two or three children? When the children of such a man turn out well, as they very often do, the most effective piety of the distinguished father lies in accomplishing that! I don't want to bore you to death, Anderson," he paused again at this point to remark.

"Oh, go on, I am quite interested," I said, for I had no desire to talk; the velocity, so to speak, of the man wearied me from trying to say any-

thing. And I am satisfied the acquaintance of General Throop and myself had unloosed in him thoughts which had been repressed for years in his Brown County burial. "Even leave out all my father's engagements," he continued; "take his choir, for instance! The bellows-blower out of sight is not the only person of whom no one knows or cares, by whom, really, all the music is produced. It is the pastor, sir. Musical people are so sensitive; only by unceasing and most delicate tact did my father prevent harshest discord around the organ. And religious people, sir, are the most tensely strung of all people; only by the perpetual power of a deeper piety did my father control and impel them, controlling *to* impel. I must and will say, as an entire outsider, Anderson, that piety is a force! We have enough of science among the politics, and receipts for making best butter in our papers out there, for me to have read something upon the subject. Not having a particle myself, I know religion to be an actual force; a something which hurls that old New Hampshire, for instance, — my father, too, during all my knowledge of him, — as I hurl a brick! The unscientific thing about it is, you cannot correlate it with — I mean it never runs into greed,

ambition; physical energy, apart from and dead against these. The philosophers trace all known force, don't they, to the sun? Here is an acknowledged force, seems to me, traceable to, and demonstrating the unknown and the unknowable God. See, Anderson?"

I merely assented by a nod, and he was off again.

"Because, you know, life, vegetable and animal, the highest force with which we are acquainted, is precisely that force which science fails to track and comprehend. Now religion is but a sort of stronger life from God. There is gravity, too, which contradicts all laws of correlation and conservation. Scientists say gravity, holding and hurling all worlds from a central sun, in virtue of its attraction, — attraction, mind, — is at once the strongest, broadest, most incomprehensible force known. They had better class the direct power of the Deity upon the soul with gravity, say, and let it alone! But I am talking about myself, a subject which I understand, however, far less than I do science even.

"The trouble is, I was lost among my father's crowd — two thousand — of children. The patriarch Jacob was not a circumstance to him. He

would have me in his study, at my book or blocks, while he was at his sermon for Sunday. As he warmed to it, I was out of existence to him. He was very eloquent, and I have watched him write, how often! All cool and concordance at the beginning of a sermon, tearing up sheet after sheet and starting again, then the pen would begin to fly, the light would come to his eyes, he would repeat aloud while writing. Sometimes I have stopped from my play to wonder at him writing like lightning, with the tears rolling down his cheeks and dropping upon the paper as he wrote. Often he would straighten himself up in his chair, both hands stretched out in earnest argument, the pen in one of them, and say to me building houses across the floor, 'O undying soul! how can you resist the logic of love omnipotent as that!' or something of the kind, his face aglow like that of an angel. Suddenly a tap at his door, and our black Corrilla would peep in and say, 'Oh, Mass Austin, I'se so sorry, but gen'l'man in parlor, say he must see you, on'y five minits!' When I add that, arrested in mid career, my father, the tears still wetting his cheeks or the light of victorious argument sparkling in his eyes, would say, 'Oh, bother!' it was not in anger, but

in pure sorrow; and it was beautiful, — for I was glad to run down with him, — yes, beautiful, his courtesy, even cordiality, to a perfect stranger, demanding, very often, that he should subscribe for one of those gorgeously-gilded wood-illustrated good books, for which a minister has as much use as a skilled carpenter has for a toy saw! Even when my father would lie on the lounge in the sitting-room, on the rare evenings he did not go out, in the brief intervals between visits, while he played with his children, his mind was on some pressing case in his church, or he would keep saying to us seated on his knees, 'Yes, darling, oh yes,' while he jotted down a memorandum or so for his next sermon. His church prospered, but his children perished!"

"Eli, as of old!" I interjected here.

"And I Hophni and Phineas rolled into one, yes!" and the lawyer turned himself a little in his rat-like burrow among the dirty bedclothes to continue, "only it was an over-occupied Samuel, in this case, not Eli at all. Samuel's scoundrel sons were judges, you remember, that is, lawyers fully developed, overturning by their rascality the theocracy of the Hebrews and bringing about a monarchy instead!

"The other guilty party," he added, "was my equally innocent mother. All along she had her hands full, if merely to keep our heavy expenses in such bounds as not to worry her husband, for, like all eloquent men, he had an insufficient idea of the immortal value of a dollar, a soul being, instead, *his* standard. She was an invalid, too. Besides, she died when I was ten, — absorbed herself then among the church in heaven as my father was in that on earth! Well for church, well for parents, but what about me! Look at the influence of Miss Throop upon Mose Evans! I tell you, Anderson, I never had the firm white hand of a pure woman upon me, since my mother died; and God in heaven knows the sort of influence the other kind of women exert, as powerful in another direction!"

There was so long a pause here that I supposed the man had exhausted himself. He winced a little as he raised his arm, encumbered by splints and bandages, with his other hand, and added after a while, —

"Oh, never mind the dirty details. Paul said, By the grace of God I am what I am; and I was just about saying, By lack of the grace of God, I too am what I am! But I am as under oath to

speak actual fact, and, jack-leg lawyer, disreputable, intemperate, and everything else that I am to-day, I know, as well as a man can know anything that, with all my capacity and opportunity, I could and should have been very different from what I am. I do not understand why Heaven left me to the grip of evil influence when I was such a mere child, ardent, ignorant, wax to the handling, — all I am to-day the growth of that! Sparks which should have slept in the soul for ten years longer, blown by the lips of our negroes into consuming fires — poor, miserable, utterly helpless child!" The man was weeping, pathos in his tones and manner such as I fail to be able to describe. Some moments passed before he continued more gravely, "Mind, sir, I am speaking solely of myself; mine may be an exceptional case. Nor would you have ever heard me say all this if I had not been trapped so in this sick-bed" — strong profanity — "and nothing to do but talk. Yet I know, as well as you, sir, that the unmitigated scoundrel I am to-day is, at last, of my own making! Any jury, any God, would hold me personally responsible and punish me, and justly, as all my conscience agrees! I do not understand beyond this why, while I take an interest in every

other client, — the greater the scamp the deeper the interest, — of myself, Anderson, as my worst client, I am tired to death and throw up the case! Why, sir, I am as thoroughly disgusted with myself as you can be."

"And yet," I remarked after a long silence, "you are so strangely happy, Mr. Archer, generally, at least" —

"Temperament, sir! Talent, — if I dared say it, — genius, sir! and, did you know it? the highest genius is merely spinal disease: Robert Hall, for instance. Dare say, sir," he added, "Satan himself, by very force of character, has a certain sort of joy! People fling me off from them with a shudder, as they would a clot of filth from their hand! I am so mired through that it is impossible the hand of my mother can ever touch me again. I dare not kill myself; I was taught to believe about the after life, that I shall be for ever and ever myself still, you observe! Drunk? What is left me but to get the drunkest drunk possible? With all that, you say true, I am always happy, very happy even while miserable. Genius, sir, is joy! an infernal sort, I acknowledge, in my instance!"

And yet, when I hailed the opportunity and was

about to enter upon conversation which might possibly benefit him —

"Bah!" he suddenly exclaimed with total and inconceivable change of manner, "what a fool I am! you a land agent and brought to tears, and that by a jack-leg lawyer! How do you know I have n't been merely lying to you to kill time. But, as a gentleman, I have n't. The man is dead, let us talk of something else!

"Now, Anderson," he continued, every trace of seriousness gone, happy as a lark, the facile face overflowing with vivacity, "you have been in Carolina so long, I wonder you have not asked the Brown County news. I am just from there, you know."

"General Throop and family are well," I replied; "I have had a letter to-day from him;" for I saw, as even his own father would have seen, that it was useless to try to talk seriously to him then, and bided my time.

"Magnificent man! Reminds one, with his portly person and white head, of a magnolia! Mrs. Throop," the lawyer continued, "is a lady. I am surprised she does not leave religious fanaticism to Northerners — ah, excuse me. Our Southern ministers, at least, are as orthodox as they are

eloquent! Miss Throop I respect and admire too much to approach. Have you any such ladies North, sir? Ah, excuse me, Mrs. Anderson"—

"Is a Southern lady, Mr. Archer; but you speak," I continued with heat, "without the slightest knowledge of the North. I decline to converse upon the subject!"

"Pardon me," my companion replied with his indescribable air of good breeding, although swathed to the chin in the bedclothing, "it is impossible for me to offend upon that theme. I may not have told you, but I studied law at Cambridge. Besides, many of my friends in Carolina are married to ladies from the North. Ladies more beautiful, intelligent, charming in every sense, I never met. I am compelled, however, to add, neither I, nor you, sir, ever met a lady of the remarkable magnetism, if I dare so speak, of Miss Throop, South or North. My only objection to the Northern ladies married South, whom I met during the war, was the excess, I almost said exceeding violence of feeling against their former section; invariably so, and surely they are not to blame for that! But, pardon me. Did General Throop say anything," he continued, "about Mose Evans?" And, as he says it, the speaker reverts from the

man of breeding and society to the "low-down" lawyer in the cross-examination manner of the question.

"Merely that he had made himself very useful, so useful that he regretted he had so suddenly left, because, the General supposed, of his mother's death, though taking place some time before. Harry Peters rents the place," I added, and desired to change the subject. I had no intention this slippery person should be mixed up in Mose Evans's matters if I could help it. "How is Mr. Parkinson?" I asked.

"Terribly in love with Miss Throop. He had better make up his mind to one of the fat Miss Robinsons. All he has to do is to marry her part of the plantation and be comfortable for life. Do you know how Mose Evans was taken sick?" the lawyer asked eagerly.

"Some form of typhoid" — I began.

"Shows the difference between us. You look at men only with reference to land. Well you came when you did. Drugged, sir. It was well known the man had money when he left Brownstown. Has n't he told you how he was waylaid along the road? Narrow escape, I tell you. That is why I came down. No one can help liking the

man. If, after that matter with his mother, I could" —

"Drugged?"

"By a Methodist preacher. Of course he was not a preacher of any sort; a brother of Dob Butler. Oh, I know him; have defended him, too, you see; dressed up in a long coat and longer face for the purpose. They found out Mose Evans was a religious man. That rascal actually read Scripture, sang hymns, and prayed with him! There is an organized gang of them," the lawyer lowered his voice as he said it.

"But the landlord never told me," I began.

"Why, sir, that is one reason," Mr. Archer explained, with a smile at my simplicity, "he was so very willing to pitch me out at your suggestion. So far as a fool can be a villain, he is one of them. This house is one of their head-quarters. They did their level best to banter Evans into cards; they would have cleaned him out in one night. Then the mock preacher slipped some drug into Evans's coffee, while waiting upon him so kindly. If they had not overdone the matter in their eagerness, by putting in too much, and he had not had the constitution he has, it would have killed him; fortunately it drove him only into fever. We

lawyers know everything and everybody. If you have money, Anderson, don't be *brash* about it. I know your wife is a great protection, — they always respect a lady, — but be careful. If they rob and murder you, no hope in your last moments anybody will be hung. They will employ me, and I am sure to get them off!" I saw nothing at all witty, however, in the lawyer's fun, "the crackling of thorns under a pot," which wearied me, and so I rose to go. I had wakened the man's memory of early days into a flood which cared nothing as to the way it ran, so that it could be allowed to flow on. Besides, it was getting late, and Helen would be uneasy.

"Hold on, Major Anderson," he begged, as I got up from beside his bed.

"You must excuse me, Mr. Archer, it is nearly eleven" —

"Stop a moment. It is about Mose Evans I want to speak. Things have happened on the Throop place. He will never tell you. You know Job Peters?"

"As General Throop's overseer, I think I know all you can tell me," I said, for I hated to have him speak upon matters which I was coming to regard as sacred, beyond the handling of even Helen, my wife.

"Be a sensible man, Anderson, and stop," the man said without a particle of merriment. "Lift a fellow up; I want to talk to you!"

I had tended in hospitals during the war, — about half a century ago, it seemed to me, — so that I did not shrink while the man clasped his unbroken arm around my neck and I lifted him as well as I could out of the hole of his bulging bed, propped him up with the bolster doubled over behind his back, and laid his splintered arm upon the dirty pillow before him. Unrequested I wet the end of a towel and wiped his face, brushing back from his fine forehead the hair with, I am compelled to say, a clothes brush, which I found on the washstand.

"Thank you. Slight-built men, like you and myself, make splendid nurses. I once knew a doctor, red-headed, feminine, not longer than your little finger" —

"But about Mose Evans, Mr. Archer."

"Yes, Job Peters was hired, as you are aware, by the General, to manage the freedmen. You know Job, Anderson, Harry Peters's brother? He could n't rule the freed blacks with the cowhide as of old, so he tried sarcasm!"

"Sarcasm?"

"His bitter fun, you see. One would n't suppose the negroes would care for that, but," added the lawyer, "I declare I honor them for it, they did. It was worse — his words — than persimmons before frost; bitter, stinging, never ceasing. 'How many lumps of dirt in your cotton basket *to-day*, *Mr.* Samuel?' 'Ah, *Mrs.* Julia Jones, a lady of color, and have to work, heh?' 'You coming to me for pay, Mr. Walter? I thought you had concluded to be governor of the State!' Nonsense like that to the hands, and always at it! Not in fun, no laugh about it, bitterly; and things worse than that; they can't help having been made free, poor wretches! It was not fair in Job. They got worn out with it at last — his fun. First thing you know, General Throop, — of course he had only Job Peters's story, — was out one afternoon among the blacks at the gin, in a passion. The General can't reconcile himself to the change, it is the world upside down to him; he is getting suddenly infirm, too, and tremulous. Broke his gold headed cane over the head of the foreman of the crop before he knew it. If the negroes had not respected the old General so, there would have been trouble right then. I suppose one of the ladies must have been frightened

and sent over to him as the nearest person; but Mose Evans came in after supper. Mr. Parkinson told me about it. The General was in a bad humor, and Job Peters was the same, as he always is. In the presence of the ladies, too. The hands had struck work, you see, — gone!

"'You ought never to strike a negro on the head, General,' Job Peters was saying. 'It breaks your cane and does n't hurt him. I always strike for the shins instead!' But Job lied; he is a coward — can hardly walk under the revolvers he wears in the cotton patch, since the blacks were freed.

"'What do you say, Mr. Evans?' the General asked.

"'I would try and strike between,' Evans said, smiling.

"'What do you mean by that?' Job roars out, for he had had one or two difficulties with Evans before. I suppose Mr. Parkinson put it into better words than Evans could use; but he told me Evans said he would try to handle them by their heart, better feelings, nonsense of that sort. I suppose Peters saw it was all over with himself, so far as overseeing those negroes was concerned, and pitched in, as the boys say. In the very supper-

room with the old General and the ladies! The ladies told Mr. Parkinson next day, and he told me. By the bye, Anderson, I do believe that Mr. Parkinson is trying to convert me, he stops to talk with me so often," the lawyer pauses to explain; "but the parson said it was beautiful. You see, Evans is very strong, as cool as he is strong. He took Peters in his grasp, — you remember my case, Anderson, — one hand over his foul mouth, like a little baby, and walked him quietly as he could out of the house, out of the front yard, out of hearing. I do not know, paddled him well, I suppose, when he had him out of hearing. There has been no Job Peters on the place since!"

"But who is overseer?" I inquire of the lawyer, doubting, for the first time, if I had not had more reference to my own interest than that of General Throop, when I effected our exchange of Charleston and Brown County property; at last, I *may* know myself less than I do any other acquaintance!

"Overseer? Mose Evans! It was not his seeking. He got me to draw up the lease with Harry Peters for his mother's place, now his, of course; and," Mr. Archer added, "I knew what

he meant by employing *me*. He knows it was not so much my fault, at last, that about his mother. The lease is for years. He intended leaving as soon as he could settle up his mother's estate; for, I tell you, sir, she held him and everything else, those strayed cattle, for instance, in her grip, while she lived! General Throop was left so helpless, you observe. The ladies, too. He took a room at his old home, with Harry. Harry thinks the world of him, especially since his trouble with Job. The old gentleman is so feeble. Whatever he may have been when they were slaves, so bewildered about the negroes now they are free, that he turned the whole plantation over to Evans. This made it necessary Mose should be at the house a great deal, reporting the day's cotton picking, ginning, pressing, contract kept, contract broken, and the like. I only know he got in the General's crop. Saw it to the mouth, — mouth of the river, our port, you know. Sold it and bought the General's supplies."

I rose to my feet with deeper sympathy for poor Evans! It was not his fault — so closely associated with the family — even if he knew all the time of Mr. Clammeigh's engagement. Apart from that, how could he hope to be considered in

any other light than as an exceedingly ignorant although very useful Brown County boor, by the young lady in question? I did *not* mention the fact to the lawyer, but it all came back upon me at the moment, and I will state it here, even if Helen sees it and I die. I refer to the last day I was in Brown County before returning to Charleston. I had called at General Throop's to bid them good-by. The General was asleep somewhere, my visit being in the afternoon. Mrs. Throop, if she was not superior to such weakness, sleeping, too, I suppose. Agnes Throop saw me as I alighted from my horse; she seemed always watching for rescue. Clammeigh, I 'm afraid. But she dropped her sewing and came out in her morning dress to meet me! The live-oaks with their swinging moss were so sepulchral; the house was so silent and utterly lonely; she had no brother; her parents were wholly unable to sympathize with her, by reason of age and peculiarity! All that poor, frail girl had on earth was — Clammeigh, a thousand miles away in Charleston, a million of miles away in the depths of his intense selfishness, if she knew it. That man was, after her parents, all she had on earth to love, her entire soul flowing to that cold individual as the

Gulf Stream, they say, flows to the Polar Sea! How she hurried out to meet me on that occasion, her dark hair parted simply upon her pure forehead, all her soul in her eyes, the perfect grace and culture of the accomplished woman with the simplicity of a child, holding both her hands out to me as I ascended the steps! I have before recorded something of her greeting when I first saw her after she arrived at her new home; it was her way to every one she imagined had done her a kindness. I speak of it again because of her utter loneliness in the world, which, I suppose, made her all the more eager, unconscious to herself, for sympathy! I had no time to enter the house, could only leave my regards for her parents, take both of her hands once more in mine, to say good-by. O beauty, grace, purity, sweetness! O magnetism, mesmerism, witchcraft! O friendship with lines not more exactly defined between itself and love, than are the stripes of a rainbow from each other. And, O Helen, Helen! Heaven knows how thoroughly I prefer and love you, my own wife, in comparison with every other woman I ever knew. *You* understand the singular, yet wholly unconscious power of Agnes Throop! Hence the depth of our interest in poor

Evans. Nothing more absurd, and perfectly natural, too, than his infatuation!

I know I am as cool a man of the world as any in Boston or Wall Street; but, you observe, people do not generally think and feel aloud, as I am doing here. The only way I can interest anybody in this bald narrative of mine is to write out, as nearly as I dare, according to the actual facts; having no art, I can merely give nature!

"Do you know why Evans left?" the lawyer halted me again as I was leaving.

"Not fully; why do you ask?" I replied.

"They are a frail class of persons, the Throops; physically, I mean," he replied. "The father and mother by age; all of them by reason of long suffering. I think they could not but respect, ignorant as Evans was, his sturdy strength of body. They have lived in our artificial society there in Charleston, — do I not know Charleston? — are bewildered by the change, and they came to esteem the strong common-sense of the man. He is so silent, too; he does not make himself more ridiculous than he can help by blunders in grammar and the like! Handsome, now, is n't he? Mr. Parkinson is jealous of him; ever know any-

thing so preposterous? Of course, Parkinson is out of the question, to say nothing of that Mr. Clammeigh from Charleston — but, Mose Evans! One thing, Mr. Anderson, I know, as a lawyer," the man continued; "it is partly land, speculation in land, sir, not wholly Miss Throop, which brought Clammeigh to Brown County when he came. I happen to know. I 'm sorry they are to marry."

"So am I; but why did Evans leave?" I demand as I open the door to depart.

"We legal men are on the watch in regard to everything, by force of habit, even where no fee is in question," Mr. Archer replied. "It was ungentlemanly, I confess, but I learned from the negroes about their place that Evans left suddenly one day. He had brought out their mail matter to the Throops, and their people think he brought them a letter that day which made trouble. I have racked my brain to conjecture whom that document could be from. I mean, to produce any such effect upon Evans. I cannot imagine; and have given it up! He employed me about that lease, but has had no intercourse with me apart from the silent eloquence, if I may so speak, of that. Do you suppose I would have come here,

learning of his peril, but for my regard for the man? Brown County never understood him; less of late than ever before. Mr. Parkinson suddenly called upon him, a few Sundays before he left, sir, to lead in prayer. It was at a sort of conference meeting in the church, General Throop and his daughter present. Mr. Parkinson dare not ask himself his full motive in requesting him to do so, old New Hampshire having been the only member of his church he had called upon previously. The eyes of every person present were upon Mose Evans on the instant; they could not help it. Strange as it may be, I was there; my eyes could detect no confusion in his face! A slight suffusion of surprise, and he quietly arose; and a better prayer, although brief," — and the lawyer consigned himself to perdition in default of truth upon his part, — "I never heard!"

"Well, I must say good-night," I began.

"I was at the fence of General Throop's place," Odd Archer continued, "about the time Mr. Clammeigh, then on a visit to them, was leaving for Charleston. I sat on my horse, merely asking to see the General at his gate. It was about a tax claim, and the General had never invited me to visit them. Evans was buckling his saddle-girth

to ride somewhere when the General came out to us, bare-headed, Clammeigh and Miss Throop with him, to tell him good-by. 'I thought,' Clammeigh said to Evans, drawing on his gloves as he spoke, his saddle-bags over his arm, 'that I had told you to have my horse ready!' Oh, it was nothing worth telling," Mr. Archer added; "merely that, and the amused expression upon the face of Evans as he lifted his hand to his hat in salutation to the General and his daughter, and rode silently away, was beautiful! The sudden glance of the lady, too, from the one man to the other!"

"And now, I *will* say good-night."

"Good-night, sir," the lawyer said, slipping himself down into his bed and more into a posture for sleep. "I said Mose Evans left suddenly. It was not suddenly. He made his preparations to leave silently but deliberately. He has some grave purpose. I wish I knew what. I chanced to be going into town that day and passed him on the road. He had the aspect to me as he rode away, of a lawyer going to the capital to take his seat upon the bench! Good-night!"

XV.

"I gained my wondrous skill,"
The artist said when asked,
"Not, as you say, by will
Through years severely tasked;
That but their tool, my makers were
Rage, Hunger, Failure, and Despair!"

It was on Wednesday that my wife and myself had our interview with Mr. Evans, as already narrated. Certain matters of my own prevented our entering his room again until the afternoon of the Sabbath following. During the interval he had improved greatly, and, although still confined to his room, received us dressed and seated in an enormous chair used for shaving purposes, which I had secured from the shop of a negro barber across the street, less by money than by saying it was for a sick man. It is impossible not to appreciate the warm-hearted sympathy with suffering on the part of people of color, and the hearty satisfaction of the barber, as he shaved his dissatisfied customers, seated uncomfortably in an ordinary hide-bottom

chair, was to me half the pleasure of my toilette when I dropped in for that purpose.

"Must n't cuss so, massa; s'pose *you* was sick!" was the emollient the smiling barber applied, with his lather, to each remonstrant. "Chair good enough; sit still, massa, or you mought get cut!"

When we first entered his room, I confess I could not help laughing aloud as I saw our invalid, still very feeble and hollow about the eyes and cheek, seated in his stately chair, his head resting upon the support behind. My wife looked indignantly at me, for she knew I was thinking of the poor fellow as awaiting at her hands worse surgery than any that chair had ever held victim for before. By way, I suppose, of chloroform before operation, my wife, after I had read, at Mr. Evans's request, a certain passage of Scripture, sang us a number of the hymns common among the blacks; sung in a low voice, they were that Sunday afternoon, the sweetest music I ever heard!

"I ought to know them," she said, after she had sung "Swing low, sweet chariot;" "I don't feel no ways tired;" winding up in triumph with "Mary an' Martha have just gone along." "My mammy rocked me to sleep singing them when I was a baby in her arms, there on the plantation.

I have heard them all my life, as our people sang them in their meetings, and over their wash-tubs. Except at church, they never sing them, or anything else, now. I 'll sing one more. We have all heard it often. It is the hymn Henry says he will have sung to him when he is dying. Listen, Mr. Evans, to 'Roll, Jordan, roll;' for I want to have a good talk with you when I am through." Helen was seated upon one side of the sick man and I upon the other, and there was a long silence after she had ceased singing. I think even her heart was softened.

"I was wishing to speak to you," she began at last.

"Yes, ma'am." Mose Evans turns his eyes upon her respectfully.

"It is in reference to Miss Agnes Throop." The eyes remain fixed upon hers, but the respectful interest has singularly changed into a species of indifference.

"If you please" — he requests.

"I have none with me," Helen replies with some severity, divining his meaning; "here is lavender;" and Mr. Evans submits to a sprinkling of the same upon hair and beard, no more to him than so much water

"I think I can save you from a ruined life, from great unhappiness, at least," Helen proceeds. "What I say may hurt you very much. Are you strong enough?"

"Yes, ma'am," with the smiling indifference as of a grown man when being treated like an infant. My wife's pride is touched. She grasps her knife, so to speak, with positive pleasure. Plunges it in!

"I have known Agnes Throop all my life. She is a good girl, a sweet girl. But that is all! She is not an angel of God. You are mistaken entirely,—nothing unusual in her at all. There are many women more beautiful, as you would know if you had seen more of the world. I could tell you even of many serious defects in her character!"

Now, it may be right for doctors, female ones too, to fib. But I was surprised at this! I studied, from the other side, the broad, open face of her patient as she spoke.

"Yes, ma'am!" Because of his lack of culture, everything the man thought or felt came to his face, and now there was nothing there but entire indifference. If my wife had stated that the afternoon sun he saw out of the window was a

turnip, instead, which a boy had thrown into the air, he would have believed it as much. Mose was a grand object, invalid though he was; that about shoulders and face which reminded one of the bust of a Roman emperor. And marble he certainly was to her statement.

"Yes, ma'am."

"And I must tell you this, also;" my wife is more quiet as she becomes more cruel. "Miss Agnes Throop is engaged to be married to a Mr. Archibald Clammeigh of Charleston, South Carolina. He is a lawyer, a gentleman of education. He has traveled over the world. He is handsome, *very* rich. And she loves him. I know her well, she loves him with all her heart! So, you see"—

"Yes, ma'am." Marble. With merely this difference, one simple question, that asked as if the reply made no difference. "Does he love her?" The man put such a meaning in that word "love!" I could have laughed at the way it hit Helen. She colored with confusion. Knowing that detestable Clammeigh as she did.

"Apart from that, Evans," I add, "as I happen to know from the person himself, Mr. Parkinson, too, is ardently in love with Miss Throop. Do you not see how foolish you are? Even leav-

ing Mr. Clammeigh out of the question, do you suppose you are a match for a gentleman of education like that minister? Besides, he will see her every day, man, while you are far away and entirely forgotten."

And, yet, in reply to all this I had from Mr. Evans merely a composed "Yes, sir."

"I have merely to add this," Helen continued after a while, with dignity; "my husband esteems you as an honest man, sincere, well-meaning" —

"Yes, ma'am."

"But you are more ignorant than you know. General Throop is of one of the first families of Charleston, and very proud. Now, you see how impossible it is. You might as well fall in love with the moon. You can never marry Miss Agnes Throop; be a sensible man, Mr. Evans. *Never!*"

"Yes, ma'am." And not a shadow upon the marble of his face. If Helen had been imparting to him the most uninteresting, or the most delightful news in the world, you could not have told which it was, from his countenance at least: and a more expressive one in telling of or hearing about a bear fight, for instance, I never saw.

"And, now," very soothingly on the part of my wife, "you know we are your friends, we wish to

save you from misery. I tell you only the truth. What," after some considerable pause, "do you think of it?"

It would have been better if Helen had not asked, but, owing to her sex, she was curious. Mose Evans sat with his eyes respectfully in hers. At the question, with the simplicity of a child, he quietly replied, "You have never loved, ma'am."

I was angry with the fellow, but I could have laughed — did laugh, I believe — outright. It smote Helen full in the face. She positively crimsoned.

"You forget, sir," she said at last, with entire dignity, "that I am married — that this is my husband."

"Yes, ma'am. Beg pardon." But it was evident that the man had nothing to take back. He was so very ignorant, you see.

It was Sunday afternoon, as I have said. It occurs to me as I write, that the day, our having read the Bible together, Helen's songs of worship, our intending soon to part, all these were not without their influence, in addition to his terrible illness and near escape from death, upon our friend. We had enjoyed a quiet time all these days in our upper rooms of the "hotel." The

lumbering old stage, driven by profanity, — the motive power, it seemed to me, of all the ox, horse, mule machinery out West; they added its pressure to mill sluice, and steam, even! — rolled up to and away from the front porch every evening about six, disgorging its passengers for supper and re-engorging them thereafter, replete with coffee, pork, and hot biscuit; exceedingly hilarious, in consequence thereof, generally at the expense of hotel and landlord, for the next ten miles; deeply depressed, also, in consequence of supper, all night and until after breakfast next day. I had ridden — how often? — in the same. In and out of the front porch flowed and ebbed, at periods as defined as the tide, the population of Bucksnort. The landlord got drunk and got sober as by a law of nature. His miserable wife showed her heart-broken face once or twice a day in our rooms, to see "how you all are getting along, and if there is anything I can do." The flaunting concubines of his seraglio, black, yellow, ash-colored, were in and out of the rooms and halls with that peculiar impudence of manner which we would think a woman would shrink, in virtue of her very sex, from showing toward a wife, and a heart-broken and helpless wife, at that! I could not help

observing how the women of whom I am speaking sent scorn and defiance to her ears, even when out of sight, in their shrill songs from the wash-tubs and clothes-lines in the back yard, — songs offensively religious. And so we lived in our world, and all the rest of the hotel in theirs, meeting only at the table for meals; my appetite holding out longer than Helen's, but getting so very tired at last of the monotonous sameness of an indigestibility of fare, the one law of which was — fry!

I say it was, I suppose, all the peculiar influences upon Mose Evans combined, possibly the feeling of some explanation as due my wife, that caused him to say what he did before we parted that Sunday night. We had risen to leave.

"I am," he remarked, "as you say, ma'am, an ignorant man; not a more ignorant man alive, I suppose," he said, as if stating the time of day, "but there are some things I do know!"

I am no stenographer, and can but report his ideas as nearly in his words as I recall them. He continued slowly, steadily, "What you say about her not being so much at last is only this. I don't know what she is to others. I know what she is to me. I never thought God Almighty *could*

make such a person as she is — never mind! I can't tell why, but I can't talk about that at all. What I look at is the hand He who makes us has had in it. It is like a camp-fire you see a-making on a cold, rainy, pitch-dark night in the woods: there 's the blaze, and there 's the face it lights up so of the man building the fire! I mean Him!" as with a gesture of the eyes upward, "and it was not *my* doing, that trouble with Job Peters, and having to be in their house so much. I might have gone off, outlived it all, but for that! As to the gentleman from Charleston. Well, I 've seen him. He is all you say. May be so! But what I look at is this, *he* is n't fit; not for *her!* The hardest thing, you said, ma'am," looking full at my wife with serious eyes, "was that she loves that man. May be so! But people change when they come to know. She is all the same to me, whether she ever changes or not. I can no more help it than I can help living, no, nor than I can keep from dying when that comes. I 'll tell you what I am going to do about it," he went on to say, after withdrawing his eyes from those of my wife and reflecting for some time, then raising them again to hers, "and then I 'll tell you why. I was on my way when I was taken down. I have

fixed with old New Hampshire about my property, how he is to send me money. For I 'm going off to try and learn something. Then I 'm going to travel about, for years, perhaps. New Hampshire has given me letters and directions. If any law comes up about the property, he has my power of attorney. He 'll have you to help him, sir. But don't fuss with that Odd Archer. You are certain to kill him, if you do, and I would n't, if I was you. While I am gone, who can tell but matters may change? I 've never spoken to her, about myself, hardly, in my life; never dared to. I mean, nothing of all I feel. But she may hear, somehow. Anyway I can do nothing but what I am doing! And now, I 'll tell you why I 'm going to do what I said." It was after some silence, and in lowered tones, that he continued, "I 've never said a word of what I 'm telling you to a soul before. I hope I never will have to again as long as I live. I think about little else, but it is the hardest thing to say out I ever knew. If it was n't my sickness, your talk with me, the Sabbath, the singing, and all, I would n't have opened my lips about it. But, it all happens so!

"You see," he continued, at last, with the frank eyes as of a child in mine, not my wife's, "I 've

lived, as I 've found out for the last year, among people almost as ignorant as the brutes, to say nothing of those among them that are wicked. You know, Mr. Anderson, how Brown County people talk about their Maker, 'the good man,' 'old Marster,' and the like. I always knew we had a Maker, but I never knew God was such a man, too, as Jesus Christ! I have come to know He *is;* and how amazing it is to me to know it, I can't tell you. *And* I never knew such a woman could be as she is. But I know now there is such a woman. It may not be right for me to put even her beside God, but she is so to me; I can't help it." A long silence after this.

"What I want to say is even harder to say," he added at last. "Because people always talk about a man loving a woman as if it was a joke, nothing except to laugh at, to make fun over. With me it is nothing in that way, nothing at all! It is the most solemn, most sacred thing I know, and what I am trying so hard to get to say is this. If such a person as God can love me as I 've come to find out He does, then she may too, some day. I can't tell how all this sounds to you, but it is what I mean."

It was so much in the manner of the man! "I

have fixed matters, as I said, with old New Hampshire," our friend concluded, "although you two are the only ones I 've spoken to about all this. I 'm going far away, to try and see what I can make of myself. All along I 've known almost as little about myself as I knew about the One that made me. Who can tell what I may not make of myself yet? I don't know, but I can try and see."

"I saw a picture last summer in Boston," I remarked to Helen that night in our own room, for she seemed to have nothing to say, "of a missionary preaching to the natives of some newly discovered continent or other. The painter had placed a savage chief in the foreground, listening to the missionary. It was admirably done — the wide-eyed wonder of the savage, at what was being said! This religion of ours is as old and as familiar to us as the sun. Suppose you had seen the sun to-day for the first time? We are a sort of Chinese, my dear; things have always been, we think, as they are to-day, will go on in the same old round for ever and ever. The gospel is as new, really, to Evans, as it would be to any other of the aborigines. How was it that night to the shepherds keeping watch over their flocks?"

But my wife has no remark to offer, and I add, after a little, "This religion of ours has lifted some of the race from a very low estate. We know it will elevate the noblest of us to a far higher level yet. If it can lift the race, I do not see why it cannot lift a man. Heh?"

"I am quite tired to-night, Henry," was all my wife replied, "let us go to sleep."

XVI.

"We are the self-same coal," —
The Diamond made reply, —
"Our difference this: the whole
Weight of the world did lie
For ages on me! Differing grade
Is differing pressure on us laid!"

"YOU are quite poetical!" my wife remarked to me one day after we had reached Brownstown, for I was compelled by pressure of business to bid Evans good-by, at daylight, the morning after the interview with him just described. Perhaps there *is* some such scant streaking of gold through my quartz, for my dear mother up there in New England had once published a thin volume of poems. Helen's exclamation, I will explain, followed upon my saying that Agnes Throop was like a pearl set in ebony.

It was suggested to me by a doleful September day we had spent, Helen and myself, at the Throops, after our arrival from Bucksnort, and

parting with Archer there, and Evans, the latter going East, the former to go — more rapidly, I supposed, if that were possible — to the bad. My wife and myself were to be in Brownstown but a short time, her presence as well as my own being needed there to certain signatures before a notary public; signatures, on her part, at least, effected just as well in Charleston; but come with me she would. "I want to be with you, Henry. They are so lonely, too, the Throops!" she said.

Lonely! Neither they nor we thought of it in all the first eager conversation after we arrived; but it was terrible, that last September Wednesday. We sat in their parlor, we tried the front porch, we wandered under the great trees of the yard, and we came back and gave up escaping what, I fear, was nothing but miasma, and so took to our big rocking-chairs upon the front porch, — piazza, rather, as it extended the entire length of the house. It was Mrs. Throop, however, who made the day and the scene positively weird!

"I sit here sometimes for hours," she said, "gazing upon the river, rolling along its liquid mud, like our turbid lives. Turning a little this way, now a bend toward the other side, now a little more and now a little less overhung by those

great live-oaks with their trailing moss; only the muddier when there is a freshet" —

"A boat now and then, mamma," Agnes insists, in the quiet but continual protest I had observed in her from the first, against the gloom of the household. Helen said even Mary Martha Washington, their self-sacrificed slave, seemed darker than before. But as to Agnes, there was that in her which showed that something beyond all this had befallen her since we last met; some terrible blow had fallen, was expected to fall — I knew not what. I could not say in what respect, if any, it had affected her outer bearing. The calamity, whatever it was, had smitten deeper than that.

"Yes. A boat!" Mrs. Throop continued, in sentences singularly detached. "Loaded to the water's edge with cotton. A shower of sparks always falling upon the bales from the smoke-stacks! I often sit at my bedroom window, sometimes wrap myself up and come, while you are all sleeping, and sit for hours watching the steamboats as they pass. It is a striking but most mournful scene, especially at midnight. All the negro crew are then on the bow, singing and dancing, the boat so apt to strike a snag, or catch on fire, or blow up, the next moment! An emblem of the world!"

But it was the great, sad eyes, the wailing in the tones of her voice, which gave such sepulchral power to what Mrs. Throop said.

"I blame myself, madam," I interposed with some emphasis, "for inducing you to leave Charleston. There at least" —

"Charleston! Charleston!" But how can I give the inflections of the poor lady's voice as she turned those eyes upon me! Dressed in black for Theodore, and everything else in the world, — emaciated until her eyes seemed all there was of her. "Charleston!"

"Mrs. Throop knows," the General here remarked with his peculiar courtesy of manner when any lady was in question, "that I have no sympathy with her religious views. While the Creator leaves us in this world I think He means we should care for and be interested in it, as He will desire us to be interested in the existence after this, when He has placed us there. I agree that an accursed military despotism has superseded American freedom; I know that universal corruption reigns in a Congress once adorned with the presence of a Hayne, a Randolph, a Calhoun; I know that free negroes and their baser white allies swarm" —

"Dear father!" It was with her hand upon his arm, with imploring eyes in his, that his daughter said it. My wife reminded me afterward how near to him the poor girl seemed to keep, all the time. As to the mother, I had observed her sitting off by herself in the parlor, or upon the porch, her eyes upon the flowing river, remaining for hours as motionless, as far as I could see, as though she were indeed dead. No trace of insanity except in the self-contained isolation of the poor lady from all the world, the lingering of a soul in the frail body long after it had drained to the dregs all the bitterness of death. Had she been indeed a disembodied spirit, she could hardly have been more separate from, as she was sacred to, her daughter. Her father was really all that daughter had left to her, beside her betrothed, on earth; in the absence of Mr. Clammeigh she clung exclusively to him. No wonder. He seemed even more portly of person than before, but there was an ashen something in his face, the whiter for the flushes of red to the very roots of his still whiter hair when he became excited, which he very often did, for he had grown very tremulous since I last saw him.

"I merely mention what all the world knows,"

the General continued. "It is inevitable to every other nation as it was to Greece and Rome. But to think of a nation living less than a hundred years! The South was the only conservative element. Had it pleased Heaven to spare the South" —

"You acknowledge the hand of Heaven, in spite of yourself, my dear!" Mrs. Throop said it in a manner, the deadly calm of which was worse than her husband's excitement. "I passed through it all so long, long ago, the lower stages. Agnes will tell you, Mr. Anderson, I have not attended service, have not sung a hymn, have not other than merely heard Scripture read at our family worship, since I came. I am as entirely done with all that as is our Theodore. I cannot plant my feet upon your world again, even with all my effort to do so. My husband is wiser than he thinks. I do not speak of political matters. So far, every nation of history has run its little career, and died, even as each of its people has lived his or her lesser life, and perished. This nation but ripens fast, in the hot summer of its wonderful prosperity, toward a rotting and a ruin more terrible and complete than the race has ever before known. It is the last nation of history.

With it, Heaven's long experiment, under the eyes of a wondering universe, in reference to the human heart, will have been accomplished, and the world itself will end!"

"Dear mother!" her daughter attempted again.

"I rarely say so much, Agnes," Mrs. Throop continued, "and I desire merely to add this: God's purpose with the race before the flood ran through thousands of years; we well know the disaster in which that culminated and closed. So of the patriarchal period which followed. The disastrous ending of the Jewish dispensation I need not mention. The result with the Christian church cannot but be the repetition of the invariable tragedy! Our Maker is eternally the same. From beginning to end of time, the human heart, too, is the same."

"But that other life, dear mother?" Agnes says, in the silence which follows upon the calm certainties of this Cassandra.

"Yes, Agnes. Thank God! And that better life is eternal. Would God I were there!"

("It is with Mrs. Throop as it was with Cowper at Olney," my wife said to me afterward. "Poor, sick Cowper! As if all the blessed creation were really what it seemed to his sorrowful eyes!"

"How like Agnes Throop is to her poor mother," I replied to Helen, "and how superior! With all her delusion, I do believe the mother acknowledges to herself her own weakness as contrasted with the stronger, happier child, — the weakness, not only of sickness as contrasted with health, of soul, but of a feeble piety to a more vigorous and beautiful, because more genuine!")

"Mother — Helen!" Agnes Throop exclaimed, as her mother sank again into silence, and with the happy face of a child, her finger lifted, "listen! Did you ever hear such a concert!"

"Mocking-birds!" Mrs. Throop replied, for all the air was full of their noise. "*Mocking*, indeed! They are like so many scoffers! I do not blame you, Mr. Anderson, about our leaving Charleston! You had," her eyes on mine, and reading me through and through, "your own objects in making the bargain. But Charleston has no existence. *Our* Charleston! Our friends are killed, or removed, or bankrupt, or actually taking part in the negro rule. Worse there than here! Our frail bodies still live, Mr. Anderson; really, we are as dead as is Theodore in Sumter!"

But Agnes had stolen in to her piano, and, not to break too rudely upon the mood of her parents,

was singing, in a low voice, the old, old war songs, My Maryland! — The Bonny Blue Flag.

"You Northern people must make allowance," she said to me standing beside her as she finished Dixie, with a curious twitching about the lips even while she smiled. I suppose it was because she had seen no one to whom she could talk for so long; possibly it was to interest and entertain me as she best could. I never knew her to speak so freely.

"We at the South had our enthusiasm, Mr. Anderson, too! You forget we believed in our side as much as you did in yours! Oh, the banners we ladies made, the music we practiced, the sewing of uniforms, the rush and hurry and pride! I remember all my life the drum beating every night when St. Michael struck nine, and the patrol marching the street to arrest any negroes without a pass; it was nothing but the roll of the drum and the march of soldiers now, to defend all we had ever known and loved! How it would thrill us, on Sunday, the calm, solemn, convincing, most eloquent sermon! My father would say afterward at dinner, 'Oh, yes, the doctor was able and eloquent, as usual, but it was like demonstrating the noonday sun.' How can a person be more

positively certain of anything than we were of the righteousness of our cause, so clearly based upon the very Word of God! And, then, the prayers, deep, humble, confident, for the blessing of Heaven upon our efforts to defend our homes against the godless infidelity of agrarianism and abolitionism! We never could understand the North, Mr. Anderson; you ought to remember you never could understand us! To this very day — but I am wearying you so!"

"Not at all, I like to hear you; besides, I will want you to hear me about another matter after a while," I said.

She looked at me and colored, seemed vexed, even. She continued, more eagerly because of that very thing, too absurd to think of for a moment.

"I cannot speak about the siege and fall of Charleston, it would take too much time. And I cannot speak of my brother Theodore Throop, my only brother, my noble and brave brother, so full of promise! Ah, those days he would hurry in from duty, all brown and dusty and hungry! He was in Sumter from the first, you know. He would kiss us all round, tell us how the Yankees kept pounding away in vain, assure us they could

never take Sumter! And so he would laugh, cram his haversack with everything to eat he could lay his hands on, kiss us good-by, and run to catch his boat. And you people of the North never *did* take Sumter! Nor ever would, if the war had lasted till now! Nor ever would have taken Charleston, if there had been a South Carolinian at Atlanta! I could tell you the opinion we in Charleston *always* had of that poor Davis" —

"We won't differ about *him*," I said.

"I was speaking," she continued, "of my brother. We used to lie awake all night, it seems to me, until we got so used to it, all of every night listening to the storm breaking upon Sumter, remembering he was there! At first we would wince and shudder at every peal, knowing about whom the shot struck, never thinking, hardly, in comparison, of the shot and shell and crashing houses in the city. We *wore* into being used to it, Mr. Anderson. But never one moment would we have had him elsewhere! We were glad we had son and brother to be there! The cause is lost; I sometimes fear we may have been mistaken about it. But we were not so sad as you may think, Mr. Anderson, that terrible Thursday when my brother's shattered body was laid in the sacred

dust in Sumter. To this day there is a glory and a beauty about his gallant death which is to us a halo around his memory forever."

"You remember," I said, "the lines, —

> "'Though love repine and reason chafe,
> There comes a voice without reply,
> 'T is man's perdition to be safe
> When for the truth he ought to die!'

although, of course, I am compelled" —

"To say," she finished my protest for me, "that you regard our cause as being, really, the reverse of the truth. Well, it was the truth to us!"

"I have sometimes given money to objects which I thought at the time were deserving," I said, "and I could not wish the same back again in my pocket even when I had learned that I was mistaken; the intent on my part was none the less sacred from recall or regret for that!"

"And we would not take back Theodore if we could!" she replied. "The truth is, I never took the interest in the Confederacy as a political question that most of our ladies did. It was Theodore, all Theodore to me. Oh, Mr. Anderson, if you had but known him, so beautiful, noble, full of enthusiasm! He cared for our independence, was

ready to die for it; I cared only for him! He was but a little older than myself; we loved each other so much; besides my parents, he was all I had in the world! I cannot speak of him; but I will say, Mr. Anderson, never on earth, never, did men and women more thoroughly believe in the righteousness of their cause. Surely none have ever proved their belief more perfectly by struggle and suffering! One great republic *is* better, but it will never be at its greatest, sir, until it is not afraid to remember with regret, even with honor, the gallant youth who gave to their mistake, if it be mistake, their all of conscience and blood and soul! I have not talked of all this to any one," she added, "since we left Charleston. It is what was said on the porch that caused me to do so. Let us talk about something else. But I do think, Mr. Anderson, our country is a poor republic so long as it is afraid to weep for its Southern sons too; afraid to drop flowers even upon their dust. Yet what do I care for it all! I 'm miserably selfish, and it is my dead brother I think about." With an instant alteration of manner, "It is our music has melted me so. Let us change the subject." Saying which she turned to her piano, and calling out, "Don't be angry with me, pa!" to

her father seated outside, played and sang, a little mockingly, a verse or two of the Star Spangled Banner.

Helen had the excellent sense to help her to the utmost. They played together a duet of the old school days, with plenty of breaking down and laughter. One or the other playing or singing, we had all the absurd, sentimental songs, grave and gay. Even Helen, who knew of other accomplishments of mine, but not at all of this, was electrified when I took my seat at the piano, and, to the jingle of its chords, gave them The Fine Old German Gentleman! If Mrs. Throop did not laugh, the General certainly did, for I watched him out of the corner of my eye as he sat smoking without. When we had seated ourselves to supper, at last, we were all in better spirits than that cemetery of a home had known since it became a home at all.

"I do not object to being happy," Mrs. Throop explained from her seat at the table. "We will be happy in heaven forever. But not here. It will be very soon. If it were not that the idea was held by low people elsewhere, I would believe that this world not only ends, as I said, but is *soon* to end. We have nearly done with it!"

"I have not, mamma!" It was Agnes, with all of her old days in her face, who said it. "I love you and pa, as you are now, dearly. I love flowers," her eyes sparkling as she spoke. "The singing of a little bird exhilarates me like an opera; at the first burst of sunshine after days of darkness, I waltz around the room as if I was at a ball. I love music with all my soul!"

"No wonder," I interjected; "you would make your fortune in opera!" and felt, the instant I said it, how eternally I *did* think, as Helen says I do, about the money value of everything.

"I love — thank you, Mr. Anderson," she said — "horses and cows. A brilliant moonlight puts me beside myself. I love housekeeping and scolding. I don't care for company as I used to, but see how these friends being with us has set me talking. It is foolish, but I do love fine laces and cashmere shawls, beautiful dresses and diamonds. I love — love — everything and everybody!"

"*I* saw you looking at her, Mr. Anderson," my spouse remarked to me in the first instant of our being alone together afterward, "as if she was something wonderful."

And so she is! Beautiful as an angel, but not at all in the sense wherein the comparison is com-

monly used! I did not say this aloud, but Helen spoke for us both: —

"Could anything be more simple than her dress, manner, whole bearing? She is as transparent as a child, but such depths, too! She is saved by what there is in her of her father, from the excess of sensitiveness inherited from her mother; yet she is so utterly alone in the world, and thrown upon herself! It is almost a pity she has given herself to such a thing as music for recreation — music exclusively. And her long, long suffering since the war began, no wonder it has so intensified her. Do you not think, Henry" —

"Think what?" I ask, Helen pausing so long before saying more. She added at last, —

"I do not like to speak of such things. She never, of course, alludes to the subject with me. But do you not think a person can go to extremes in devotion, even? She is, never mind how I came to know, as simple, as earnest, as trustful in her religion as in all else. No one could be more silent as to such matters, yet I do know that Mary never sat, in her home at Bethany, more — can I say really? — at the feet of Christ! In these late years I am satisfied He is to her the most actual friend living. Is there no such thing as too much

faith? Coleridge says there is as much danger of *other*-worldliness in some Christians as of *this*-worldliness in the case of people generally."

"Did he?" I reply. "Well, I know this. It is merely through a certain peculiar period she is passing. If she is to live, and live to be a wholesome wife and mother, Heaven will see to it that there shall be, in due time, enough of earth, enough of the purely human, to balance matters. This is merely, I say, a particular period, such as in some form we all pass through, although it leaves us the better for it forever!"

"My mother wrote no poems," Helen said with a smile, "but I will venture to say this: A diamond is no more self-luminous than any other clod. The difference lies, I suppose, in the transparency, that is, the power of receiving and transmitting light; *and* in the keeping one's self in connection — is it not so? — with the One who is the Light!"

XVII.

The ghosts which haunt this world are not
The spirits of the buried dead;
Yet ghosts there are, the ghosts of what
Have yet the walks of life to tread!
The vague, phantasmal shapes are we,
But shadows of the men to be;
Made men, and not unmade, by death,
Then first inhaling fullest breath,
"We shall be like Him!" Scripture saith.

HELEN and myself were, of course, the guests of the Throops during our stay in Brown County, and it was, as well as I can now remember, the morning after our music, that Mary Martha Washington had succeeded at last in getting my wife off to one side, to communicate something she had evidently been eager to say to her from the moment we came. Yielding to some pretext of the old woman in regard to a hatching out of thirty-six chickens by a guinea-fowl, Helen had gone with her after breakfast to a remote poultry yard, to find and admire — nothing of the kind.

"De best way is to wait in dis place till we hear dat old guinea's potrack!" the faithful servant

said when they were safely out of sight and hearing from the house. "And oh, Miss Helen, I must talk to you! What *is* we goin' to do? Marster General he can't hold out much longer. Old missis is clean crossed over Jordan already, 'cept her poor body. I 'm mighty 'fraid somethin' gone wrong about dat Mars' Clammeigh. I nebber thought he was one of us born at de Souf anyhow. Dat Mr. Parkinson, he is in love so he 's lost flesh. He 's too flimsy like. He a minister an' dar's n't preach one sermon against dis fool freedom de debbil an' de abolitionists set up. Phew!" Strong contempt. "It 's a *man*, a strong, loving man, Miss Agnes needs. I thought Mars' Evans was too low down once, but bress your heart, Miss Helen, dey moved from de East, Car'line, I believe. How dat great, strong man loves her! At de first of his coming on de place he loved her so he could n't look her in de face, got pale, trembled when she spoke to him."

"I 'm sorry to hear it," Helen said.

"You wait, Miss Helen. I do wonder whar dat guinea-fowl gone; hear her potrack, potrack torectly. You see he overseed de hands. De *men* hands. You would n't believe it, Miss Helen, but dem fool women say dey *ain't* hands, dey is *ladies*,

ladies ob color! Refuse to go into de field! O my hebbenly Marster, de folly of dis freedom! What wid dem fool niggers, and what wid me after dem, Miss Agnes has had a time!"

"I thought Mr. Evans was overseer," Helen said.

"So he was, so he was, Miss Helen," the woman eagerly replied. "De men never worked better in deré lives. I mean till dose fool women broke off work, stayed at de quarter, breshin' dere heads all day wid dere wool-cards; de men didn't half work after dat. Even dat Mr. Evans was put out, it was so new to him. One night he was in de 'gret house' after supper, talkin' wid Mars' General about it, we was all so put out what to do.

"'You manage de men, Mr. Evans,' my Miss Agnes said, laughin' as she used to do in Charleston, 'I'll manage de *ladies*.' Ladies! You see, Miss Helen, de crop *had* to be picked, right away, heaviest crop of cotton I ever see. Well, Mars' Evans he was at de quarters when she come. It was de berry next mornin'. See? Bell just rung to go to de field. Dat young missis of mine! she had put on an ole straw hat, had a woolsey dress on, all gathered up in de skirt, cotton basket, an' her dinner in it! All de fool women came out to

see. 'Now, women,' she said, laughin', 'we 's all free, free as de air, but dat cotton 's got to be picked. *I'm* goin'. Who 'll go with me?' You see, Miss Helen, it was de *way* she said it! Lor' bress you, I shook both fists at dose niggers, snatched basket out ob de hand ob de foreman ob de crop, an' followed my young missis. Better believe *dey* did! Dat Mars' Evans, I thought de man would hab — would hab! He took off his coat, folded it up carefully, laid it on de top rail ob de fence — an' picked? I should t'ink so! But he kept wid de men on dere side ob de field, he dar's n't come near us. And dose women picked as Hebben made um to pick! I 'clare before Hebben, Miss Helen, what wid her talkin' and laughin' an' pickin' ahead of de field, an' bettin' me she 'd hab de heaviest pick! — I 've fixed her up for many a ball, say nothin' of church, in Charleston, but she nebber looked so hebbenly pretty! An' she slipped me off home to hab extra supper for dose niggers! No trouble after dat! Whar can be dat guinea? *You* hear a potrack?"

"If I was in your Miss Agnes's place, I would be very angry at you if you thought I could love a Brown County overseer!" Helen said. "I 'm ashamed of you, aunty!"

The old woman had reference to a power superior to that of General Throop, when she replied solemnly, "Ole Marster has fixed who she shall marry! I don't know anything about it, more dan you, honey. When dis world was made dere was no woman for Adam, de first man you remember, an' so he had to make a woman for Adam. I nebber saw de man yet was good enough for my Miss Agnes; my young Mars' Theodore said dat a thousand times before he was killed. But God can make somebody 'pressly for her! I nebber 'low myself to t'ink it can be dis Mr. Evans, 'cept dat he is bein' made out ob de berry dust ob de ground for somethin'. You can't tell how he has changed under Miss Agnes, like linen bleaches in de sun. Ebberybody respects an' loves him. An'," continued the woman, "dat man is *marster*, if *she* is mistress! Lor', Miss Helen, we broke down in de deep mud, Miss Agnes and I, drivin' back in de ole buggy one day, long ago, from Brownstown. In de deepest part ob de cypress swamp. Mars' Mose Evans he come along on his horse,—he nebber was near her, but then he nebber was very far away from her, somehow,—jumped down, an' begged her to let him take her out. She got angry, tossed her

head *dis* way, turned as red! Refused, said I could help her, she could wait till her pa could come. 'Mr. Evans, remember your place, sir; you shall not do it!' she said, proud as could be! She was drippin' wet, night was fallin'. Mars' Evans never said one word, put his strong arms around her like a baby, carried her to de side ob de road where his horse was, put her on behind de saddle on his overcoat, managed some way to get on before her, she had to hold on him; left me to follow after dem on de buggy horse. Bress your soul, Miss Helen, she 's mistress, but he 's *marster*, sure!"

Helen told me all this, in substance, out at the front fence, as I was mending a martingale before mounting my horse, the same day, to ride over to Harry Peters', now living, as I believe I have said, at Mrs. Evans' old place near by, and acting as General Throop's overseer.

"Did you ever know such a lonely house, Captain Anderson?" he asked me after we had finished business that day. "I go over and am as funny as *I* know how to be. Miss Agnes laughs, but it is a terrible strain upon her, the situation. Puss — I mean my wife — makes butter expressly to take over. Mrs. Throop is a ghost. Actually

a ghost, sir, lingering out of the grave a little; but my wife, afraid of her mother, loves Miss Agnes as if she was her own child! Oh, I know Evans is out of the question, perfectly ridiculous of course. Not even may be so; May bees of that sort don't fly any month of the year. But I do wish! You know he boarded with us. Why, sir, he was at it from before day to breakfast, soon as supper was over till I don't know when, for my wife and I go to bed at dark almost."

"At what?" I demand; "you were speaking of Miss Throop."

"And so I am now!" Harry Peters continues, with as much heat as a man who was always "in fun" could feel. "At it? At all of it. Studying, Major Anderson, studying! He kept himself supplied by mail, I suppose, through old New Hampshire in some way, with books. It was like feeding wheat into a threshing machine,—kept the mail busy! I 've heard of school-marms before, but Miss Throop 's the most powerful one I ever came up with. You see how crazy these poor, deluded negroes are to learn to read; and what freedom is to them, that lady is to him. None of us ever joke him about her; Job tried that. He never mentions her, nor speaks to her,

hardly, so far as I know. But she is to him like a bright spring day to a planted field; the soil 's deep, you can *hear* the corn grow!" And thereupon Harry Peters gives me the story of the revolt of the women, not at all as a joke, for it was the great trouble of the day over the entire South.

I rode over the General's plantation with Harry, the General too feeble to accompany us, that day. I was glad to do so. The fact is, I was becoming seriously uneasy as to matters. One thing I resolved upon, and that was to see Mr. Clammeigh upon the subject, delicate as it was, the day I reached Charleston. But I was glad to learn all I could from the overseer. Distrusting Miss Throop's betrothed as I did, I confess I derived some comfort from what Harry Peters told me about Mr. Parkinson. "He comes to see me every few days," that gentleman said, while we were having a smoke upon his front porch after a good dinner. "I had supposed Mose Evans was the most desperately in love of any man I ever knew, until I came to see how Mr. Parkinson suffered. It is worse for the minister, because he sees her every few days; besides, they are nearer to each other, Miss Throop and him-

self, than poor Evans can ever dream of being. He is her minister, too, and has her respect and confidence, as he has that of us all. I suppose it is because of his being slight-built and high-strung that he loves her so. My wife — you know how full women are of their mischief — always brings in her name when he is here, just to see how pale he gets, and how eager he is. But I don't think," my host adds, as he fills another pipe, "that *he* is her equal, either!"

"Why not?" I demand.

"I like Mr. Parkinson as a man and as a minister," Harry Peters adds, "and nothing is more important than religion. But, the fault of his training, I suppose, the man runs too much in that; knows nothing, cares nothing for politics, farming, country gossip, men, women, and children. He 's too narrow, too one-sided. It makes his religion *too* spiritual. He 'd have more practical influence upon every-day people if he ate more pork and corn-bread, and talked more about cotton and cattle. And then he is too much like Miss Throop!"

"Like Miss Throop?" I ask.

"I mean he is too nice and slight, too fine and lady-like. A woman likes a man to be a man,

just as a man likes a woman the more she *is* a woman. For a man of his make pretty Molly Robinson is the very wife. Plenty of land, too, and it 's just what he has n't got. If he owned a thousand acres or so of good bottom land, he would light down on it out of the air, don't you see! But he would no more look at little Molly Robinson, than Miss Agnes would think of Mose Evans; he 's determined to have her or die. They say she is to marry a gentleman from Charleston, or he will get her yet; see if he does n't."

At this juncture, my host branched off into one of his funniest stories, his nice wife seated knitting, and, I had almost said, purring in her little rocking-chair close to his side, she was so gentle and kitten-like and loving — "Puss" being her name, and continually used. I liked Harry Peters, thoroughly enjoyed the oxygen of the man, if I may so speak, but I forget what it was we all laughed so heartily about that day. I want to add here, however out of place, what Mr. Parkinson said to me when he was East soliciting funds for their church, afterward. Circumstances had thrown us into very confidential intimacy then, or he never could have said, as he did, "It seems a

singular remark to make, sir, but I have come to believe that a man can cast himself too passively upon the bosom even of his God! Our Creator wants a man to be manly! Of course you will understand. One thing I do know, there are cases where He refuses to answer importunate prayer by anything in return, outer or inner, — repels, casts off the suppliant. Not only because that suppliant is selfish in his seeking, but whining and whimpering and indulging in a sickly sort of dependence, when he ought to stand up like a man, bear terrible trouble silently, and do known duty stoutly, whatever the duty may be!"

But I never dreamed of mentioning that remark a moment ago; certainly the maker thereof had improved into a sturdier and far more happy and effective man than he had promised to be before, when he thus opened his heart to me; *that* being itself, however, a lingering of his former weakness. For my part, I am perfectly willing to be the friend confided in: but not the friend, of the two, who confides, not if I can help it. I know the world, unfortunately, too well!

It was hard work to get away from Harry Peters's fun, and, more pleasant to me still, his wife's perfect enjoyment of it. I was just in time

for supper at General Throop's, and went to bed as soon after as I politely could. Not that I was unusually fatigued after my ride about the plantation, talking with the hands here and there over the same all day, as well as with Peters; the fact is, I was seriously perplexed. You observe, I had a hundred other matters besides, pressing upon me for decision; many thousands of dollars involved. I was glad to get to bed.

It was as natural, under the circumstances, that Helen and Agnes should have sat far into the night, all the rest of the household wrapped in sleep.

"My heart yearns over her as if she were my own and my only sister," my wife said to me when at last she came into our room. "My knowledge of the world, as compared with hers at least, makes me feel much older. I do so desire to help her; and how can I, unless I know how matters stand in regard to that — Clammeigh? I heard many hints before I left Charleston of a new flame of his, a certain Cuban heiress. One thing I know: his handsome mansion there is being remodeled and made ready for — something. Agnes well knows it is my sincere affection for her, not mere curiosity, which makes me anxious to find out when we are

to have her in Charleston as Mrs. Clammeigh, or whether there is any possibility of her becoming — the idea! — Mrs. Parkinson, instead."

"Or whether," I interposed, "there is any chance for poor Evans."

"Nonsense!" my wife replied, with such energy that I will stand aside and let her take my place as narrator of all that occurred between Agnes and herself. Understand distinctly, it is not myself, but Mrs. Anderson, who thus proceeds: —

"I would so dearly love to see you married, Agnes," I said at last. "In certain senses of the word your betrothed — may I speak of him, dear? — is a superior man" —

"There is the most singular weakness in me, Helen dear," she replied. "That word 'superior' brings it to mind. I never told a soul before; it is a species of hallucination. Do you know, I cannot remember when I did not consider myself, I am ashamed to say it, somehow a being superior to those around me. It is an odd deficiency in me, but I have always felt as I suppose a princess born to a throne does. It is in my blood. Except towards my parents, dearly as I love every one, conscious as I am of my folly, even when I feel

most humble I have an absurd sense of condescension! I dare say I am to be empress of a star in the other world. If I were married to a king today, I would wear crown and robe and hold my court as if I were, for the first time, in my true place. A singular fancy, is n't it ?"

"And you would make a most gracious majesty, dear," I said. "But to be a queen there must be — unless you are of the vixenish sort, like Elizabeth — a king. Your parents, Agnes, are not as strong as they were, Theodore is gone, and they may be taken, dear. Persons of your sensitive nature, so tenderly shielded all your life from the world, need a protector. And, Agnes dear, we will be so glad to see you married."

"I suppose suffering has made me too sensitive," she replied. "And, at last, it lies so much in the individual who suffers, Helen, not in the sort or degree of the trouble. There is Mr. Harry Peters, our overseer," she said, evading me still, and she seemed resolved to keep as far off as she could from not only speaking but thinking upon the subject. I was the more resolved to know certainly if I could. And therefore I listened but in part to her as she continued about Mr. Peters. "The funniest man I ever knew," she said.

"Papa and I dined there one day by special invitation, and it was all very grand. They had soup and fish first. As their girl was bringing in afterward an enormous turkey, she tripped and fell, and dashed it full in Mr. Peters's face. I thought — suppose it had been papa at the head of *his* table! how I trembled! But Mr. Peters only laughed; laughed and made us laugh by his funny ways, till it seemed the best joke in the world! His dear little wife thinks it is all *so* amusing, and you could n't help enjoying their enjoyment. He has done papa good like medicine; I never knew him to laugh so since secession. When we were threatened with cotton worms, Mr. Peters turned that into a joke. When his children were lost in the swamp, he was, his wife told me, certain of finding them, keeping the household and all the searchers in high spirits till they were found, and then he cried like a woman, even while he was laughing more than before. He is the brightest, most joyous person I ever knew, and nothing but a poor, lame, sickly overseer! That Mr. Archer is so happy because he drinks, but Mr. Peters is" —

"What kind of a person, Agnes, was that Mr Mose Evans?" I began.

"In a moment Helen. I think I am exactly like Mr. Peters. By nature. But, Helen dear, God alone knows how I have suffered. It was not merely our long and terrible time in Charleston through the siege. I do not believe we had one night of sound sleep during all those terrible — centuries they seem to me now. Nor was it the loss of property and the breaking up of the largest, certainly the most refined, at least the dearest circle of friends heart could desire. It is such a strange feeling, too, to have lost your country. Papa feels that everything one calls country is as utterly lost as if it had been swallowed up in the sea; he is the resident to-day — not citizen — of that nation in all the world which he likes least. There is our removing, too, to such a region as this! And then, do I not know, my father and mother must soon go, and leave me alone in the world! So far as this life is concerned there never was a person more entirely without a future! Oh, Helen, if God had but spared Theodore! Did you know him, Helen? It was my being his own sister made me fancy myself a princess; I worshiped him as my king, for he was a king. The most beautiful, the noblest! — and, oh how glad I am, for his dear sake, that he is dead! I wake, dear,

and lie and listen to the great river flowing by, and the heavy breathing of the wind rising and falling, as in sleep, among the live-oaks, lifting and letting fall their long gray moss ; so far away, alone, alone ! "

After some silence she added, " I saw a lovely little flower by the roadside as I got out of the buggy at our gate, coming back from church last Sunday, and I put a stick of wood on either side of it to protect it. When I went on Monday to transplant it, I found the poor little flower, crushed down in the print of a mule's hoof ! Oh, Helen, doesn't it seem sometimes as if God didn't care what trod upon you ! I am tempted at times to think I 'm no more to Him than a jamestown weed, any vile thing that chance wheel or hoof may trample into the mire ! It does me good, Helen, to know it is a Father who strikes me so hard. But when I know that God is also a man, who allowed Himself to be trodden down under wicked feet, his greatest glory and happiness afterward and forever because of *that*, I have only to feel that *He* is with me in all that happens, and I am singing again like a bird ! "

As I kiss her cheek, down which the tears are silently flowing, I whisper, " I asked you about

Mr. Evans, dear, because we met him as we came here," and, drawing her closer to me as we sat in the dimly lighted room, trying to put her in my place when at the hotel, I told her the whole story of our meeting Mose Evans on that occasion. I did not leave out one thing! I do not know how I worded it, but I told her that there was no saying what such a person as Evans might become. And I told her of the quiet, silent, desperate determination of that foolish, foolish man! Once or twice she tried to turn the conversation, but I can be as self-willed as anybody, when I exert myself. I left nothing unsaid. When there was nothing more to *be* said, she only kissed me and replied, "You must be so tired, Helen dear. It is after midnight. What a shame in me to keep you up so! You will find a lighted candle and a cross husband in your room. Good-night, dear. May you have pleasant dreams, — during the *night*, too!"

I could but return her good-night kiss and leave her. What else could I do, Henry? She is the most complete combination of opposites I ever knew. She is more dependent upon others, yet more self-reliant, than any other person I ever met; so impulsive and unreserved in tempera-

ment, yet so silent where her inmost heart is concerned. These years of bitter trouble have intensified all that is beautiful in her nature. Her passion for music, too, — spending whole days at her piano, Aunty Washington tells me, — has had the same effect. Perhaps, too, if I had her child-like temperament and her terrible trouble, I might have the same simple faith. I do believe her deepest wants are so entirely satisfied by it that she feels far less than she otherwise would the need of any other, but trusts Him as an actual, living, real Friend, the wisest, strongest, most sympathizing Person in the universe, — all the world, all her future, completely in his hands!

XVIII.

"No sails on all the main there be" —
"And yet your ships shall come from sea!"
"All earth lies frozen, bare, and cold" —
"Your violets blue shall burst the mold!"
"Dense darkness dyes all earth and skies" —
"Yet none the less the sun shall rise!"
"My dead are *dead!* I weep in vain" —
"More beauteous for that bitter rain,
"Your dead, poor heart, shall live again!"

MANY a month had passed since the visit of Helen and myself to the Throops in their home out West. I was engrossed, meanwhile, in business so extensive, increasing, and pressing, as to keep me almost continually upon the wing between Charleston, New York, St. Louis, and San Francisco. Even during my periods of rest in Charleston, it was rarely I could get home from our office to Helen until near midnight. Very often my wife would wake up only enough to say, "And here you are at last, are you! You are killing yourself, Henry. But I have not been thinking about you. Oh, Henry, how lonely, how

very lonely Agnes must be!" Generally I was too tired to do more than assent to this, and go to sleep. Even when Helen read to me, as I ate at table, Agnes Throop's letters, I did not listen as I should, especially as some letter in reference to land was sure to be pressing upon me for an answer just then. The fact is, I was making hay while the sun shone, knowing that the market was sure to slacken; and slacken it did, or I never could have found time for these pages, I assure you. It was the same with my correspondence so far as Evans was concerned. All these days he was studying at a certain venerable college at the East. Every time I saw the tops of its buildings from the car windows, when journeying in that region, I would say to myself, "The next time I come this way I will certainly stop!" Yet I never did. Because I never could. Perhaps it was because I was compelled to write such telegrammic letters in reply, that his were so brief. About all I could get from them was, that what time he was not upon horseback there, or in the gymnasium, he was in New York, Boston, or Philadelphia. I had a sense of keen regret at this, until we got as clerk a graduate from the institution, perfectly unfitted, I am obliged to say,

by his books and dyspepsia, for business, who explained matters. It was only the exercise Evans took, coupled, I suppose, with his power of profound sleep, which enabled him to master his amazing amount of study, and keep up, in all, I had almost written, its splendor, his vigorous constitution. "I had no personal acquaintance with him," Parker, our clerk, told me. "He is a man of fine presence, but somewhat reserved, and he was simply one among several hundreds of us there." Parker added that he, Parker himself, was, — and I feel satisfied it was so much the worse for him in a business point of view, — a student taking the regular course, while Evans took an optional and irregular one, Parker being a "Clio" too, whatever that means, while my friend was a "Whig." Very soon I turned over, not the letters merely, but the entire correspondence with Evans, to my wife, whose interest in him seemed to have wonderfully increased of late. Although she gave me items now and then from his letters while he was at the college mentioned, and after he went to Europe, she never had one at hand when I did have time to read it. My general impression was that she slipped them into the envelope conveying her own epistles to Agnes

Throop. To this day I do not know whether Evans made allusions in them to Agnes or not. My wife was quite silent upon the subject. And so months, and months upon months, fled away; it is impossible for me, without referring to memoranda, to say how many. Which prepares my way to tell of what comes next in order among the events of this statement of facts.

It is very singular! — I mean how persons come upon each other, compelled unconsciously the one toward the other by some secret magnetism. The first time I was in New York, for instance, the one man, of all the million there, who knew me, slapped me upon the shoulder as I stood at the window of a broker's office in Nassau Street. Since I became superintendent of a Sabbath-school in Charleston, I have never entered a theatre but once. I was in Boston, and I dropped in to see the Black Crook, solely to be able intelligently to warn our young people against such things. Only one person was North from our school, a young man, and I had not taken my seat before he rose from the next chair exclaiming, "Why, Mr. Anderson, how did you know I was here?" I merely took his arm and led him sorrowfully out, and he cannot understand it to this day.

It was such an accident in regard to the *Scotia*. I happened to be spending three days at our office on Wall Street. Our treasurer had remarked casually, "I see the *Scotia* is signaled," and his remark came back to me as, many hours later, I was crossing to Jersey City. Our ferry-boat was passing under the stern of the great steamship; I was envying the passengers clustered along the railing, saying to myself, Please Heaven, a little more money made, and Helen and I will take the children with us and see how the Old World looks these days!

At the instant one of the gentlemen on board, standing with a lady beside him apart from the rest, leaned over the railing, lifted his traveling cap to me, calling down at the same time, "Good evening, sir. All well?" and pointed me out to the lady, doubtless his wife, as he replaced his cap. I knew immediately that it was some officer in the Confederate service who had known me during the war. As many of them as could do so had gone across the Atlantic. I have no time to talk about that just now, but certainly their mistaken rebellion was the most magnificent mistake in point of dimension, desperation, and utterness of disaster, history has ever known, and I have a

hearty liking for the men, greatly as I rejoice in their defeat. So I said to myself of this instance, Glad enough you are to get back, I 'll be bound; glad and proud by this time in your inmost soul, that your foolish swords failed to hew this continent into miserable fragments!

I suppose I had the eternal instinct — surely it is of God in us all — toward the returning prodigal as the crowd rushed ashore pell-mell from the ferry-boat. I acknowledge it did occur to me that my friend, whoever it was, might want a home upon some of our lands, like General Throop, for instance. But my chief reason, thank Heaven, was to have again in my own one of those cordial hands! There is Helen, too, and Agnes Throop, — they may know his wife; at least there will be an item for to-night's letter home. I need not, however, have made such short work, on my way to the *Scotia's* dock, of the business that brought me over from New York. When I got to the picket paling, I had no card of admittance and had to wait without while the steamer was slowly warped ashore by cable and capstan. But my friend was as eager, if less demonstrative. His wife still beside him, he stood upon a coil of rope on the quarter-deck, searching for me with his

eyes among the struggling crowd outside the pickets. It took him but a few moments to succeed in that. Now, I firmly believe if you were to see an inhabitant of Mars through a telescope, you could tell his culture and breeding on the instant. Certainly you would have had no trouble as to decision in this case, — something in the very gesture and bearing of the person, Heaven knows what! As he sees me he lifts his cap and waves it, which I acknowledge by lifting my hat upon the end of my umbrella and bobbing it to him above the heads of the crowd about me.

And now followed the deliberate bringing ashore of the trunks and the ranging of them on the floor within the pickets, in lines and by the hundreds, for the inspection of the custom-house people. I was diverted from all this, however, by a party of well-dressed Frenchmen waiting within the inclosure, near the fence dividing me from them, for a passenger aboard. Before their friend could come ashore they laughed, gesticulated, chattered, as I had previously supposed impossible to man; but when that friend climbed down to them in some wholly impossible way from the vessel, freshly charged with the peculiar electricity of Paris, the kissing, shrugging of shoulders, chattering all at

once, indescribable to-do, was painfully suggestive of Darwin!

My attention, however, was called off by my Confederate officer, whom I had forgotten, but who had come ashore unseen and now very quietly put his hand through the pickets.

"Mr. Anderson, glad to see you!"

The words were spoken with genial warmth, yet as quietly as if we had parted only the day before.

"How are you, general — colonel" —

I actually stammered and hesitated, blushed I dare say, as I gave my hand through the bars. A large man, military bearing, plaid cap, gray overcoat, magnificent beard of golden hair, glad to see me, with all his soul in his noble eyes, yet so entirely self-possessed, in contrast, at least, with those Frenchmen making such fools of themselves.

"Why, I never dreamed" — I began.

"And you had my letters from Germany?" So cordial, yet so quiet!

Mose Evans! But why should I have been so completely taken aback? Possibly because I had not the least idea of meeting him. It was so sudden. The man was so utterly changed, yet so entirely the same! But, I demand of myself, even

then, why should I have that instant sense of being so many inches shorter, so many pounds lighter, than my friend? Such a queer fancy of being quicksilver in contrast with bullion? I am so frank with Helen, I told her even this, weeks after. "You are of wholly different build and birth, Henry," she said. "You certainly had the part of mercury toward him, if you say so, separating him from his dirt!" Married people grow to think together, and I had made the same reflection. Only it was not true. It was Miss Agnes Throop. I have made Helen a Yankee girl, and Helen says she has made me into a Southerner. Why, the power of the Founder of our faith is but the influence upon you, sir or madam, of one person upon another; only that His is infinite influence!

I had spent so much time of late among the hurried inhabitants of Wall Street, that the contrast of Mose Evans to them was the more refreshing, the immediate comparison of my friend with those effervescing Frenchmen making his quiet of manner, I suppose, the more striking. His trunk was entangled among hundreds of others nearly, yet, conversing with me meanwhile almost as undisturbedly as if we were alone to-

gether in some secluded spot, he stood like a statue amid the hurry and fuss and confusion until his turn came, and nothing more easy and smooth than his management of matters during the search of his trunk by the officials. I think it was by reason of his steady mastery of himself. Besides, he was so perfectly well, so exceedingly strong and happy! "And, now, if you please, this one; it is a lady's," he said to the custom-house officer, producing the key of a very cathedral of a trunk, next his, as he spoke, avoiding casting his eyes for a moment in that direction as the lid was being lifted.

"I saw you beside her on deck, Mrs. Evans, I suppose. Allow me to congrat" — but I think he could not have heard me, those Frenchmen were so noisy, as he merely paused in mid act from stroking his beard with the palm of his left hand, and looked at me. Under sudden impulse I appointed to meet him that evening at a hotel in the city, and, elbowing my way out of the crowd, I left; my feeling was exactly as when great Confederate news arrived where I was in the South during the war, and I kept from knowing it as long as I could.

"I am so very glad," he said, "to see you,"

and he took my hand in both of his, yet once more, when we met again in the parlor of the hotel. It was unnatural or natural in me, as you please; I suppose my business has made it my instinct; but how sharply I watched him as he took off his orange peel of a cap, for he had just come in, laid off his gray coat, passed his hands over his head, face, voluminous beard, and then took my palm in his own again.

"Oh, over Germany, the Alps, Italy, France, England, of course, Scotland, Ireland," he answered to a question of mine about his travels. If there had been the least affectation in him! The smallest beginning of boastfulness, even the shade of an uneasy feeling! There was disquiet on my part. I am satisfied he must have observed it; even that did not disturb his childlike calm. He was so entirely certain, so profoundly happy! At least, if one's outer man is any reliable evidence thereof.

"Now for a bath," he said, after we had chattered for some time about everything the world around except what I was mainly interested to know, "and then, dinner."

I almost blushed at myself in my mirror in the act of dressing with unusual care. Why should I

not keep on my business suit of Scotch gray, since it was merely with Mose Evans I was to dine? He was not in the parlor of the hotel when I came down, for there is something of the slowness of General Throop in every Southerner I ever knew, and I was glad that I had no demoralizing suspicion of being ill dressed, when I found in my corner of the parlor several of the passengers by the steamer, evidently from among the best people! What a transforming power in leisure and money, clothing, education, travel, freedom from consuming care, I said to myself of the gentlemen and ladies present, recalling to mind that I had never seen in the House of Lords, when in London, or out of it, a superior if equal type of people. My attention was, however, immediately fastened upon the person who was, as naturally as Victoria in her drawing-room, the queen of this assembly. And it was a lady so much of the English style of beauty, such impressiveness of size, contour, bearing, as that it was impossible to say whether she was matron or maid; little over twenty in either case. There was something in her perfect repose as she sat upon the sofa amid her volumes of silk — lavender color, I believe it was — and lace, her hands lying in mutual embrace upon her

lap, the cool gray of her singularly open eyes, the motionless poise of her erect head, — something that reminded one of an Egyptian statue. Impressive is the word, and a more impressive woman I never saw in my life. Had he been Prince Albert in the queen's drawing-room, my friend could not have been more completely at home with all when he entered, well dressed, but without the least remainder of courtier or fop. Were it not that there was no least intention of the sort on his part, there was the graciousness of blood in the cordial way in which he came first to me to shake hands and then turned with me, as I rose, to her Majesty, the queen upon the sofa.

"I have often spoken of you to her. It is at her request," he whispered, as he led me forward. "Allow me" —

It was the sudden and insufferable nuisance of the gong in the corridor, and not any embarrassment upon my part, which prevented my catching one syllable of what followed. "If you will accept Mr. Anderson's arm," he was saying, as the gastronomic thunder rolled away down the valleys, so to speak, of the hotel, "I will assist your father; he is used to me you know," and I observed the old gentleman upon the sofa beside her seemed a confirmed invalid.

"You cannot think how kind he has been to my father," my companion said, as we took our seats at the table set apart in the dining-hall for our company, to whom, as we were seating ourselves, Mr. Evans introduced me. "We met in Egypt. My father had a passion to ascend the pyramids," the lady continued. "Mr. Evans would hardly suffer the Arabs to touch him; he almost carried him up in his arms. Mr. Evans is very strong." And well I knew she intended to say "large," but was withheld by her social tact, although I am not considered what is usually styled a small man, I hope. A higher instance of social poise, yet power, I never met in a woman; besides, I was wondering, as we sat, if the diamond ring upon her finger meant marriage or not. Just then her father said, in a querulous way, from the other side of her, "Edith, my dear!" and my companion had to listen to certain remarks from a spectacled, and, I dare say, quite distinguished German across the table, and translate them, not worth uttering in the first place, to her father. When that father interrupted us in the parlor after dinner, in the same way, in reference to a French and copiously moustached politician present, I began to fear it was a weakness of the old gentleman, the

more so as he seized speedy occasion to tell me that his daughter was equally conversant with Spanish and Italian. Certainly she was as unconscious of possessing any special accomplishment in the matter as she seemed to be during the music she favored us with that night. I am not myself fond of brilliant performance either with the piano keys or the voice, yet I do admire all along the subtle and exquisite mechanism of the effort, not the result at all; it is the marvelous machinery producing the result which I encore.

"You cannot think how embarrassed I was all the evening," I said to Evans when he was in my room next day.

"At what?" my friend demanded in his even way. Now I was not afraid of Mose Evans at all; preposterous indeed if I should be! "Because the gong," I said, "drowned somewhat my introduction to the lady. I could not well ask her if she was your wife. To this moment I do not know" —

I was surprised at the sudden and strong color suffusing my friend's whole face as I rattled on; less of modesty it seemed than of anger. He sat looking at me, as the color died away from his face, almost curiously, as if he doubted his ears or my sanity; at last he replied, —

"I had hardly expected it of you, Mr. Anderson. Of *you*, — knowing the facts of my history as you do!"

There was quite a silence. I was nettled by the tone and manner of the man; angry, I suppose, chiefly at myself. "The lady, Miss Edith Livingstone," he said after a while, "lives near this city. We met at Cairo, afterward at St. Petersburg. She was traveling with her invalid father, and I had the opportunity of being of some small service in Paris and London. She has no more idea of anything of the kind," color rising again, "than myself." I hardly thought it wise to tell him so, but if that thoroughly accomplished woman of the world did not have some thought of the kind, I am mistaken. Nothing in the least unmaidenly, of course; but there was a certain something in the cool gray eyes and in the movement of those clasped hands, when my friend came and went during our few days at that hotel! I have mentioned the matter to Helen, yet we may both, it is true, be mistaken.

Strange to say, my new friend, so thoroughly my old friend, also, was far more at ease with me than I was with him. I rejoiced in and yet resented the culture of the man. There was, in

comparison with myself, a size, a steadiness, an absolute confidence, a measure of youth yet seniority, which amazed, at least impressed me almost to irritation. Yet, as we sat late into the night over our dessert that day, dining together in my parlor at the hotel, he was, for all his perfectly cut broadcloth and snowy linen, and easy use of napkin and fork and waiter, merely — Mose Evans! When I say he was utterly changed, and was not altered in the least degree, I suppose the explanation lies in his being a simple development of the inner man along the lines of his nature, which I knew before. I do wonder if it was because he was born South? — such a singular reminder he was of General Throop. Our waiter, colored, took for granted that he was the chief of the two; certainly from no assumption upon my friend's side. It is a trifling thing to mention, but, as we sat down to dinner, he glanced inquiringly at me, and, as I was about to ask what he wished, he bowed his head and said grace. Up to that moment I think our waiter had regarded him as a person of distinction, a millionaire most likely; not so certain of it after that, I fear.

My having been over the same ground myself made it more easy and interesting, — our talk of

his travels, — but he had taken Europe more slowly and thoroughly than I; every edifice, picture, opera, king, queen, peasant almost. And all along he had asked me after but one person by name, — my wife. I suppose he rested upon my assurance at the outset that "all are well."

I like chess, — that is I like to make moves in matters generally, so I ventured to ask, as we conversed, about the beauty of women over the water; in Italy, for instance.

"I had letters of introduction from Boston, partly through our old friend the postmaster, partly from acquaintance made while studying," he told me, "to people in London, and one or two in Paris. I was fortunate in making friends. I liked the ladies, but the men more; it merely happened so, I suppose."

"You do not ask about Miss Throop," I said, almost irritated; abruptly, in fact.

"No. Because I know already. Perfectly," he said immediately, with the face of a child. "I always knew. At least, after the first moment in that old barn of a church." Was this — insolence? I have to do some singular things in land matters, — so, I dared it.

"Have you heard of Mr. Clammeigh's mar-

riage?" I asked, in a low, sympathizing, impressive manner, very seriously indeed.

"No! And he is married, is he? But you know I never knew much of him." Entire unconcern. I looked at my friend with pain and surprise in every lineament of my face. "You knew Mr. Clammeigh was engaged to Miss Throop. I had supposed the news of his marriage would — would" — and how keenly I watched him!

"Ah, yes!" he answered on the instant, the gladness all over his face only brightening as he spoke, and with a motion of his right hand to his inner breast pocket. "It reminds me, I want to show you, Mr. Anderson! I could not find it in Paris; found it, at last, in Vienna; the very thing I knew must be somewhere. Our ring. But it is going through the custom-house."

"And you think I deceive you!" I hesitated at the familiarity, but went on. "My poor, poor fellow!" The exclamation jarred us both a little, and Mr. Evans colored, but added, not the shadow of a fleeting doubt on his face, "Oh, excuse me! I did not catch your meaning. I was thinking of that ring. You did it very well. What a comedian you would make. But, not exactly! It is with me about that as it is, if you will excuse me,

about smuggling. I am no better than other people, but it is so thoroughly against one's self to try to cheat and lie — I mean with those officials. They would have seen it in my eyes, all over me! And a something for *her*. I would as soon have dipped the diamond in mire."

"And you do — not — believe — that — Miss Throop — is married!" I gazed pityingly upon my friend as I said it. If there had been but a doubt, merely the least questioning in his eyes whether I was jesting! Not a bit of it! Nothing but sunny and entire certainty there! And so we left the question; *he* was not interested in it. "You seem to be so happy," I said in a turn of our conversation, and with ominous accent.

"Am I? I never thought of it. It is my thorough health, I suppose," he replied, "caused by perpetual change of scene and air. I think, too, I have more faith and the repose of faith than some persons."

"Faith?"

"I hesitate to speak of it even to you. But, over there," with a gesture toward the Atlantic, "they are chattering, in all languages, about there being nothing at last but law and force. Now I believe," he added with the candor of a child,

"there is a Person to match this universe. He was a revelation as wholly new to me as was Miss Throop; and I rest in her as I do in Him."

"It was a vast change for you, from your cabin to — the whole world!" I remarked, I remember, during the evening.

"Not so much as you would think," he replied. "Certainly, not so very great a change as I had anticipated; and really it is but a small globe at last, is it not, Mr. Anderson? You can sail about it in three months, can flash your telegram around it in a minute. Smaller than I thought. Apart from their houses and clothing, people, too, are very much alike; don't you think so?"

"There is something singular in the matter of inheritance," my companion remarked after a turn in the conversation. "My poor father was a very bookish man, I was told, as well as a person of great refinement. Now I do believe that intuition is merely inherited experience. I have been reading a great deal, very rapidly because every volume seemed oddly familiar from the first, as if I had certainly read it before. So of painting, music, science, even, as far, at least, as my limited knowledge of them extends. It is as if it all was

already lying dormant in me, easily wakened. Singular, is n't it ? "

And so we drifted this way and that ; talked Brownstown thoroughly over. Hah, — I think of it only as I now write, — the Confederate officer of my imagination *did* want land at last ! " What I fully hope she will consent to," he had casually observed, " is to leave Brown County. I do not care to live there because I think she will prefer to go where I was not known before. I have thought of the northwest, of our spending our new life in a new world. What do you think, Mr. Anderson ? "

There is nothing in luck, nothing outside of experience and readiness to handle whatever material you have. I am sure nothing could have been more natural in this case. I represented large bodies of land in California, and Mr. Evans owned land like a Texan *Empressario*, in Brown County. Affairs were put in train then that resulted in exchanges of lands with which we are not dissatisfied so far. All this has slipped from me without my intending it, but if the reader imagines that he can now anticipate all that is to follow, let him not be too sure ; events do not befall in sober narration like this as they do in fiction.

"You know what a long infancy I had," my friend said in connection with our land talk that night. "And I have been reading, seeing, hearing, growing, I hope, of late. Well, I am young, strong, eager for work. I will find what I can do, so that it is work and plenty of it!" And I can say this, at least, that Mr. Evans is to-day second to no man in our land company. Frankly, as a "man of affairs" I never met his superior; and why not say so?

I had him down on Wall Street next day. Our people thought, at first, he was an English capitalist. I was a little annoyed, amused, gratified, and perplexed at it, but my being his friend was considered as a sort of feather in my cap. Mose Evans! As I used to know him in Brown County! Miss Throop's influence, of course, — I heartily assent to that, knowing her so well, even though failing so painfully in making her known to the reader. Yet I ask of the reader, even if a lady, could anything have been made of this man if it was not in him from the first? It is not out of a cockle-burr that an oak grows; now does it? I wish somebody, not a divine, would write an argument, as I have said before, for the resurrection, based upon a man's capacity for the same, illustrated by facts, on *this* side death!

We had some singular talk together that night, which I would like to detail, but I feel it is not proper. My friend assumed all along the influence upon himself, modest as he was in speaking about it, of two persons, the one being as real to him as the other. The first was simply a man, who, he heartily believed, is also God. The other was a woman. Say he mistook actual facts as to the one and the other, — if I do not add that they were living persons, both, to him, I fail of the truth. Certainly, real or unreal, they made him all he was!

I suppose it is sheer force of association, but this reminds me — I am glad I did not forget it — of a letter my friend found waiting him in New York. He read it to me the day he went West, a week after his arrival from Europe, compelled sorely against his will to remain as long as that arranging exchange of land. In looking over it then I inadvertently, from force of habit when a document was in my hand, put it into my breast pocket. It was memoranda rather than letter from old New Hampshire, the Brown County postmaster. I found it yesterday among my papers, looking for a deed. I transcribe only the last part.

"You will have heard of Mrs. Throop's death.

Her husband always sends for his mail, is very feeble and broken. Wife's death, I suppose. Miss Throop in deep mourning as usual at church, looks very worn, yet helps our singing.

"Dick Frazier is dead of drink, which reminds me that you ask after Mr. Archer. I infer that Mr. Anderson when here had serious conversation with him, as at Bucksnort. Also, Mr. Parkinson. From the fact that he took to drink more desperately afterwards. He was in my store since then, upon New Year's Eve. Bought a box of caps. 'Hunting?' I asked. He never uses a gun except when he is expecting a difficulty. 'Would you like to know?' he asked. His manner was unlike what I ever saw before. Pale. Haggard. Desperate. I told him I would. His manner of cursing me was singular. There was no one else in the store, it was so very late. I attempted to reason with him. He renewed his profanity, including his Maker and his parents in the same. I am but a small man, quite old and feeble since we parted. I placed myself between Mr. Archer and the door. He attempted to force his way by. Struck me violently. I grappled with him. He is not strong. Had the door locked and him in my back room. He blasphemed and broke down

in an agony of weeping. He had intended to shoot himself, as I supposed. Had he intimated it I knew he would not. I am satisfied that the residence here of General Throop and family has had much influence on him. I will not detail our conversation. I did not speak of his father or mother. Nor of church. I spoke, as well as I could, of another Person. I am satisfied that other Person was in the room and helped me. And helped him. He spent the night with me. We have had much conversation since. He has ceased from evil courses. Seems changed. I do not know. Has never even pretended to stop before. He intends to study for the ministry. I suggested Andover. He said the grace of God might enable him to endure the Yankees since the war. He feared not, however. Thought it safest not to risk it! He studies instead at Columbia. If he holds fast to his Helper he will stand. If he does not he will not. I have great fears as to the result, but cannot tell. Good-by."

As to myself I had not sufficient belief in the possibility of the lawyer's reformation to give it a second thought, and hasten to record my parting with Evans at the office of the hotel.

"You are exposing yourself, my friend," I said

with all sincerity as we shook hands, "to a terrible disappointment. Your very certainty of success will make it more disastrous!"

"I will take the risk," he added with hearty assurance as he held my hand.

Could there have been, I asked myself as I stood there, any engagement before he left Brown County? Could anything have resulted from his correspondence with my wife while away? Nothing of the kind so far as I knew, nothing whatever! I was seriously offended on Miss Throop's behalf. "Unless she has pledged herself, do you think your confidence of success wholly respectful to Miss Throop?" I began.

"You could not doubt my deepest respect for her, to save your life," he replied. "As to my confidence, as I told you the other night, it rests in her as it does in my Maker. *She* will understand me, perfectly!" And, with another cordial shake of the hand he was gone. Upon the whole, I would have said nothing of all this to him, had I known he was such a — what *is* the word!

XIX.

Its hue and fragrance somehow slips
From fruit when it has reached the lips.
Far less his thought in marble wrought
Than what the sculptor's soul had sought.
The bride, however lovely, seems
Not quite the bride you clasped in dreams!
The Indies of Columbus were
Not his great Indies in the air!
Their glory infinitely more
Than after he had leaped ashore!
For never can your hand contain
That which you hold within your brain,
And less your soul must still disdain!

SEVERAL weeks, I do not know how many, had passed away since my friend, — I confess I hesitated to speak of him since our meeting and parting in New York, even to my wife, as Mose Evans, — had gone West. No letter had arrived for her from Agnes Throop. You who are reading these lines may feel very certain as to the result, but Helen and myself, knowing the parties so much better than yourself, were not certain by any means; far from it! And if you, respected reader,

find yourself wholly mistaken in the result in question, I think you will gracefully acknowledge it is not for the first time.

I remained silent, waiting anxiously the solving of this, as we always are of some one of the unceasing succession of conundrums coming up before and pressing upon us for solution, our life through. We were too deeply anxious to say much to each other upon the subject, Helen keeping up, whenever the matter was alluded to, something of her disdainful attitude. We all know that a woman holds to an opinion with a hundred times the grip of a man, unless where her heart is concerned, in which case she is far more eager to give up than she was, in the first place, to grasp; glad that she has something *to* give up. Well I knew from her silence all along, still more from her dissent and criticism after I had told her of my meeting with Evans in New York, that she believed in that gentleman with all her soul, was eager as a child for his success. She had asked me with much unconcern for the one message I had from our friend after his arrival at Brownstown, — "My dear friend," it ran, "I have arrived safely. I have seen her. I will write," — with the hope of squeezing, so to speak, more meaning out of the

message as by very pressure, I suppose, of repeated perusal.

Our suspense was not, however, to last without end. I was in our office in Charleston one afternoon, when who should enter, with his usual eager step, but the Rev. Mr. Parkinson.

"I am East to solicit help toward building our new church," he said immediately after asking as to the health of my family. "You may hate to hear it as heartily as I do to mention it. But I am compelled to get aid, and I speak of it at once so as to have an unpleasant subject stated and done with!"

"I do not see why I should hate it," I said. "But, never mind about that. How is General Throop?"

"Had you not heard? He is dead! He died very suddenly," my friend replied. I was shocked, for death is something wholly unnatural to us, at last; we had every reason to expect it in this case, yet it is always a surprise. In the eager questioning and reply which followed, I learned that General Throop had fallen, struck by death, one afternoon. There was something rumored about an altercation on the part of the General with Dr. Alexis Jones, who had mismanaged the case of a

sick negro on the place, as bringing about his death. "The family were very reserved upon the subject," Mr. Parkinson said.

"The family? What family is there beyond Miss Throop?" I began.

"Considering the circumstances, she is in excellent health. Do you know," he said with some abruptness, "that I am married? that I have my bride with me?" and he turned some shades paler as he said it, for excitement assumes that livery in the case of persons of his temperament.

"Bride!" I am certain I put too much astonishment in the exclamation, for my friend grew paler still. "Can it be possible" — and I had the sense to stop. My visitor understood me none the less. "It is not Miss Throop," he said. "I esteem and admire Miss Agnes Throop very greatly, but," and he added it with a degree of self-respect which wonderfully became him, "I have done far better, for myself I mean, — yes, and for her, — than that. Surely you know who it is? Come, guess!" with eager eyes. I knew politeness demanded I should say, and on the spot, "Oh, Miss Smith, of course, and a charming lady she is; let me congratulate you!" but, as I journeyed on the instant over the length and breadth of Brown

County, in swift and eager search, I could not imagine anybody.

"Is it possible you do not remember Mary Robinson? they called her Molly!" he said.

"Why, my *dear* sir," I exclaimed, "you cannot mean little Molly Robinson, that rosy-cheeked dumpling" —

"The very same," he said with satisfaction.

"Indeed! I used to kiss her when I stayed with her father — Judge, General, I mean Squire Robinson. I beg your pardon, she was merely a child!" I exclaimed.

"Not sixteen when we were married, and she is a child, a mere child still, the merest child in the world!" and it was extraordinary the glee with which the young husband said it, rubbing his hands.

"Yes," he said as we hurried to the hotel. "We had just risen from dinner when I left her. She never was away from home in her life before. I would not be surprised if she has had a good cry since I left, she is the merest child, you know! I bought and left with her all the picture papers I could lay hands on before starting!"

My friend would not allow me to wait in the parlor, but hurried me up with him to their room

upon the highest floor, for hotel clerks can tell their grade of guest, city or rural, on sight, and we burst in upon the bride to find her in a situation vastly more in keeping than if expecting us in parlor and in state. The little room was in utter confusion, clothing, picture papers, plates of fruit, a great paper of candy, too, I remember, strewed about on table, chair, and floor. Perched upon their great traveling trunk stood Mrs. Parkinson, hugging a cat to her bosom from the assaults of a poodle barking furiously below. "She *would* have that dog, I got it for her as we came along," my companion had explained the barking as we opened the door. "My dear, this is your old friend, Mr. Anderson," he said, and she stooped down to be kissed as of yore when I approached. For she was nothing but a child, plump, her honest, somewhat freckled face round and full as a May moon, an abundance of brown hair down her back in the confusion of the moment, small and merry eyes, beautiful teeth, her dress a little short for a married woman, but that may have been owing to her pedestal — you can see scores of just such girls at Sunday-schools in country neighborhoods, without exaggeration, several millions of them, in fact, plentiful as daisies and buttercups!

But I was far more interested in her husband's beautiful illusion in reference to her than in herself; you can witness the same — I did not say *de*lusion — in the case of many a pale, bookish man. But I am bound to say that Mr. Parkinson was vastly improved since that day I first saw him when shaving by the roadside. He was in stouter health, sturdier, manlier in every sense.

I did not enjoy our merry greeting and after conversation as much as I otherwise would, on account of conjecturing how Helen would like the matter.

My wife, I knew, understood how to manage matters far better than myself. Besides, they would have to get ready to go to my house. Bidding them good-by, in twenty minutes I was at my office and had sent our messenger boy home with this note: "Dear Helen. Mr. Parkinson and *bride* are at our old hotel! Have them to tea." I sat in my office-chair imagining my wife's bewilderment, the meeting and all, laughing as I had not laughed for months.

Somehow, exert myself as I will, Helen always gets the better of me, always! When I entered our sitting-room I found the newly married pair, apart from a little shyness in their strange

surroundings, peacefully at home with Helen. Largely on account of my wife being in such excellent spirits, evidently relieved in mind. A moment's reflection explained why, and I wondered I had not thought of it before. As I entered, Mr. Parkinson said, "I was just telling Mrs. Anderson about General Throop's funeral! I was speaking about the grief of the negroes. He had never owned those Brown County people, you know, yet they felt he was their natural master; on both sides they had been used all their life to the relation of slave and master as to nature itself. No monarch more feared and respected than that stately old gentleman by the entire county; it was the largest funeral ever known.

"Mr. Parkinson tells me Agnes bore it better than he could have hoped," Helen began.

"Much better!" our guest said, paling a little I imagined, and hastening to say, "I did not like to marry so soon after the funeral. I suppose I am somewhat impulsive, but we had made all our arrangements to be married, and I was anxious to be abroad in search of funds for our new church. And Molly here had never been out of the county. I was eager to show her the world. Harry Peters was greatly missed at the wedding, for he would

not come, sending his wife instead. They ought to build the church themselves, I know, but I shrank from pressing it, as, I dare say, I should. I do not mean to urge the matter upon any one. To tell the truth, I hate to beg ; I am the poorest person, for such business, living ! "

They were our guests for some weeks, the bride remaining with us while Mr. Parkinson journeyed around upon his mission in other places. But Helen gave up, as well as myself, obtaining any final information in reference to Agnes Throop, to whom my wife had, of course, written in condolence immediately, urging her to make our house her home. " As to Mr. Parkinson's wife," Helen said to me the moment we were alone together, " she is a good, simple country girl. You need not have looked at me on Sunday when I spoke of my headache. I could not have accompanied her to church in that fearful white hat ! How perfectly Mr. Parkinson has succeeded in deluding himself ! " For the young husband had theorized his heart into entire sincerity in the matter !

" Nothing more natural than that," Helen explained to me. " He is a person of highly imaginative temperament, as you know. His failure in reference to Agnes, his daily association with Miss

Molly as her father's guest, too — nothing more natural, foolish as it seems!"

"She is so young, so uninformed in regard to everything!" he said to Helen and myself one confidential evening when his wife was out of the room. "She is like the whitest and softest of wax in my hands. If it is a glorious thing to be an artist and to carve an ideal nymph, or queen of wisdom or power or love, how much nobler to mold a living soul, to form and inspire an immortal for eternity! It came to me, — I boarded at her father's you know, — as a mere fancy. I was sitting on their front porch one afternoon when she came in from school, — her hat in one hand, her books in the other, her hair down upon her shoulders, — all glowing from her walk. I never was so lonely in my life, so desponding, I fear. As she came in, the idea flashed upon me, merely as a beautiful fancy at first, you observe. It slowly grew to be a glorious reality before I knew it! I do believe if you were to ask Molly the distance, say, to the moon, she would reply, I haven't the least idea! I intend to teach her Latin myself; I have bought the books already. I am advertising for a music teacher, some lady to play upon our melodeon at church, to return with us!"

"You have talked with her about it?" asked my wife without a smile, and with a measure of sympathy of manner for which I kissed her afterward.

"Of course! We talked of nothing else before we were married. Of nothing else, I assure you," Mr. Parkinson said eagerly. "Very often since! She is perfectly willing! The best-natured little darling you ever saw! I love her with all my heart, for what I am to make her. And she loves me far more than brides generally do, having some idea, at least, of all I will be to her!"

We sincerely liked Mr. Parkinson, but I fear we encouraged him to open his whole heart in reference to Mrs. Molly, in order to learn the sooner what he knew in regard to Agnes Throop and Mose Evans.

"I know none of the circumstances of Mr. Evans's first visit to General Throop's after his arrival," Mr. Parkinson said at last one evening. "There was much confusion; all my conversation with Miss Throop was, of course, in regard to her sudden and terrible loss. I know you have been anxious to have me say more about her and Mr. Evans, but we have talked since I came so much in regard to my plans for the church, and specially

about Molly. Besides, to tell the truth, I was so taken up then, as I have said, with our getting married" —

"You have seen Evans?" I asked.

"Oh, certainly. He and Harry Peters had charge of the funeral, we were all so very busy. He seemed to me to be much improved!"

I think our guest was somewhat ashamed of saying so little on that occasion, for it must have been the next evening at tea, he gave us an account of his first meeting with Evans.

"It was at their place, a day or two after the General's death," he said, "Miss Agnes was in her own room. I was seated beside the body, which had been prepared for burial. I was looking at the face of the dead, and thinking. Did you ever notice the aspect, Mrs. Anderson, of *dignity* in the countenance of the dead? I was never so struck with it as in the instance of General Throop. There was the grave, set, imperial something in the countenance of the grand old man, as of a monarch. It was Mr. Evans remarked all this to me as he seated himself by my side that day. I recall his remarks now, but I must say my attention was diverted at the moment entirely from the dead to Mr. Evans him-

self! I confess I was greatly struck by the transformation! Knowing, as I did through our old postmaster, that he had long been a hard student, I expected great change in him, of course. He had been abroad, too. You cannot tell how I look forward to that some day with Molly! I know," he added, with changing color, "that you are laughing at me with all your kindness. But just wait and see!"

"We men, Mr. Anderson," he added, "of slight build, cannot help envying stronger men. At least, a person of somewhat feeble physique from under exercise and over study, like myself, cannot but admire any person of Mr. Evans's health and vigor. He came into the room that day where I sat beside the dead, in such a glow, I had almost said glory, of full life and energy, not at all boisterous, saying little, very quiet — there is such evidence of reserve of power and happiness! I wish I had such stamina, constitution; heartily wish it, I confess!"

"Do you know, Mr. Parkinson," my wife asked, "if they are to be married, Miss Throop and Mr. Evans?" We had to find out some time.

Our friend dropped his eyes to his plate as we sat after our tea, then raised them to my wife's

face and gravely made answer. "No, madam, I do not. Owing in part to the hurry of funeral and wedding and — other matters. I esteem and honor Miss Throop," he continued after some silence, "as we all cannot help doing. Her peculiar trials also have been such. She is so singularly alone in the world, too. I have spoken of Mr. Evans coming suddenly upon me. It was the strong contrast in him, that hour, of vigorous life side by side with the aged and the dead! The whole place, with its loss and sorrow and seclusion, even before death arrived, was like a sepulchre. Miss Throop, I say it sincerely, was like the angel at the sepulchre, full of life herself, but her work there ended with the death of her parents. All the circumstances help Mr. Evans, — are as shadow and background to him, so to speak!"

"And you think Mr. Evans — one *cannot* well call him Mose Evans now — improved?" my wife asked, as she drew Molly to a seat beside her upon the sofa; "you know I have not seen him since we parted at that roadside hotel after his sickness."

"I knew him well before he went," our guest answered, "and I could not have imagined it even

of him! He is as modest, I may say as simple, in his mode of thought and feeling as ever. He had little to say except in reply to questions, but I was impressed with the force because of the freshness of what he said. I had asked him in one of our few interviews, I remember, as to the leading preachers in the East and in Europe. 'It seems absurd for a person like myself,' he remarked, 'to say such a thing, but it is a fact, and you cannot imagine how it has comforted and assured me, being what I am. What I mean is this. I attended service in a different place every Sabbath I could in America and Europe, and I found that the praise, for instance, in the most successful churches of whatever sect, was as that of children together, simple and heartfelt. Exactly the same with the preachers who sway and impel the masses; in every case it was as a strong child, if I may so speak, talking in simplest words to the understanding and heart of children! I have thought,' he continued, 'a good deal about the Greeks lately. What purely human beings they were, loving art and beauty and strength, so given to bathing, feasting, fighting, sunshine, the open air, loving and hating and thoroughly enjoying themselves like beautiful children. When soul

and body are at one again, as they were in Eden, Greek and Christian thoroughly reconciled, then comes the millennium. And the millennium has arrived already to every one who, at the cross, makes unconditional surrender of himself and becomes as a little child! I felt,' he added, 'that it was not such a hopeless thing with a man like myself, at last. I found that plain, childlike common-sense held the money of the world, and is rapidly coming to hold and wield all political power. Look at a picture or statue,' he added; 'listen to a leading scientist; it is the same!' "

"Ah, Mr. Parkinson," my wife said, after we had left the tea-table for the parlor, drawing Mrs. Parkinson nearer to her as they sat on the sofa, "that was merely an effort of Mr. Evans to make the world into his own image. You are, like my husband here, perfectly infatuated about your Mr. Evans, with his external improvement, and that lying largely in his better clothing; abundant jewelry, too, I have not the least doubt. It is not so with us women; we have intuition, insight. That is my comfort in regard to Agnes Throop; she is too much like her mother to be deceived by externals, I am sure" —

Mr. Parkinson was regarding Helen as she

spoke with eagerness so peculiar that I thought it well to say, "I do not think it respectful in you to your sex, Helen, to speak of — was it not? — their instinct!"

"Insight, Mrs. Anderson said," our friend corrected me, "but it is instinct with Mose Evans. It would be more respectful to him to speak of a planet as true to its sun, in referring to his connection with Miss Agnes. It is nearer the truth to say his devotion to her is as that of a noble animal to its owner; the idea, even, of any other woman has never entered his mind!" There was so much in the tones with which Mr. Parkinson said it! "I do not know how Miss Throop will like one thing," he added after a little. "Our friend does not bemoan the Confederacy, although he abhors the injustice, in many respects, of the North; and suffers with the South in its defeat. All this wretched devastation of greed and ignorance, North and South, he told some of us one day at the post-office, is but a transition period to such a oneness of prosperity and nobler freedom and civilization as none of us can yet understand. He is a child, too, in his perfect faith in our future!"

"Just like your Molly," my wife said, "for I am tired of Mr. Evans. I am so glad you brought

her with you, Mr. Parkinson. She has been everywhere over Charleston with me, and I have given her ever so much matronly advice. I think you and she have done wisely," my wife added, with a degree of conviction at which I winced a little. "I am sure she will make you," Helen added with singular warmth, "a wife true and good!"

"I see that she is asleep," Mr. Parkinson said, looking lovingly upon his bride. With her head resting upon my wife's shoulder, the poor little girl was sound asleep, sure enough. It may have been the alterations made by my wife in the arrangements of the child's hair, the style and color of her dress, possibly the exchange of her set of jewelry for a much more costly but modest set, — Helen retaining the bride's as a keepsake in exchange, she said, — but she was improved, no denying that. Her perfect childishness, too, as to being married so soon and to such a man, one could not but take an interest in this brace of babes in the wood. She would outgrow her form of childhood; her husband would never get beyond his! As you would have acknowledged had you heard him then and there. He hoped to make a sort of evangelical Paris of Brownstown, whose lady of leading culture and Christian influence was to be the round

and wholly unconscious Molly sleeping so sweetly, her careless head upon Helen's shoulder!

I ventured to ask him in regard to Odd Archer. Sure enough, as New Hampshire had informed Mr. Evans in his letter, the lawyer seemed, at least, to have reformed. "He has made some of the most eloquent temperance addresses ever heard," Mr. Parkinson told us. "After some hesitation, we have even called upon him to lead in our prayer-meetings. Impossible for a man to speak more earnestly and effectively! He has given me new ideas as to the best way of preaching, altogether, I assure you! But" —

"Yes, but," I echoed — "*but!*" and Helen, too, shook her head in concert with us.

"He is studying for the ministry at Columbia," Mr. Parkinson added. "So far he has stood firm. I have a good deal of hope, but, I am ashamed to say, very little faith. 'I would a little rather he was safely dead,' Harry Peters said."

However, up to the date of this writing, so far as I know, Mr. Archer stands like rock, and we can at least leave him in the existing halo of hope. But from the bottom of my heart I, for one, do wish we had a more honest faith in Him whose life and death and life again in this world it is to

save, a loyal and entire faith that He can and does save any and every man who puts himself in his hands, body and soul, for time and eternity, from everything and thoroughly! Possibly if we immaculate people had such belief in Him for the desperately hopeless cases, such sinners might have the same, as being the current religion, for themselves!

This is all incidental. It made but an eddy in our talk, which lasted till very late that evening. We dropped the lawyer out of our conversation, but not more utterly than Mr. Parkinson did Miss Throop. She evidently was, like Madame Roland, the beautiful heroine of an extinct era! — so far, at least, as he was concerned.

And so our guests came and departed. It is an easy matter to imagine our deep anxiety in reference thereafter to our friends West; so anxious were we, in fact, that we ceased almost altogether from conversation, Helen and myself, upon the subject. She relieved her mind by writing every day or two to Agnes — like her sex. I presume I was true, likewise, to mine, in leaving Evans to write or not exactly as he saw fit; and in plunging myself all the deeper into my own matters, especially as real estate was beginning to look up again.

XX.

"I smite so hard," the heavy hammer said,
"Because your grain is iron and not lead!"
"Ye strain my wheels, among them fiercely rolled,"
The engine groaned, "because your bars are gold!"
"Thou art a god," you cry, "so strong and stern!"
"I am," he says, "because with sweat I earn
In you, like statue wrought from hardest stone,
My image, through all ages to be known
My masterpiece, my very son, mine own!"

I HAVE run many risks in my diversified life. Sometimes it was on water. At times it was, and in more senses than one, by reason of the peculiarity of my business, and very literally, on land; to say nothing of peril to life itself during my toils, compulsory, in the service of the late lamented Confederacy. But I do say that I never undertook adventure quite so hazardous as I now do, in my mode of closing this narrative. The truth is, I should not have undertaken it, not having, to say the least, the necessary time from other and pressing and very different engagements. I

had, even, contemplated abandoning the task altogether; possibly would have done so although at this eleventh hour, for the present, at least, had not the recent letters to my wife from General Throop's daughter occurred to me. From sheer habit which I have taught Helen as to documents, these letters have been carefully filed away, and they lie before me now, beautifully written, but crossed and recrossed as is the habit of the sex. They can but slay me — I refer to Helen, who is on a brief visit to her relatives to exhibit our latest baby, and Agnes — when they find it out; but, I have read it somewhere, and say it here to soften their coming wrath, Happy even death inflicted by hands so fair! Moreover I will carefully omit, from the copying of the letters, all I can of the correspondence, for my sake as well as theirs!

I should explain that matters may appear a little confused at the outset of what is here copied. It is always confusion where the heart precedes the intellect, which is why woman is so much better adapted to heaven and to home than to anything else.

"I am, this most beautiful morning, Helen dear, the happiest woman living," this first letter runs. "I am to-day as radiant as an angel in heaven, so

far as happiness goes. I say this to explain why I write so freely, and we who have known each other all our lives, have sympathized in our terrible sorrows, certainly can feel with each other in our joys! Who would have supposed the languid brunette you are, Helen, would have made so spirited a woman. It was your marrying a New Englander. What noble children yours are! They are already urging *him* to run for Congress, and when he is elected I will get him to have a law passed that all marriages shall be illegal except between Northerners and Southerners; will speak to him about it this very afternoon as we ride to the post-office! I cannot help it! It is change of climate, I suppose, change only less than from earth to heaven in every respect. The day, too, is so brilliant, the very birds twitter and wheel about in the cloudless light as if they were beside themselves; I must write, too, as I please! And before I forget it, do invite Mr. Archer to visit you in Charleston. In his worst days he was always of good blood; he will make one of our most eloquent divines! I do believe it was because our dear, disagreeable old postmaster felt assured of this, at last, that he consented to die in his attack of pneumonia; what a grim yet sincere

Christian he was! I wonder if he allows himself to show any outer interest in what he sees and hears there! In heaven, I mean. But he must, I know, for we will all be transparent to each other there, translucent to the light which falls upon us from God; just as I am this radiant day! You know he left enough to the church to build a handsome edifice and parsonage. There are some things I could tell you, Helen, about that excellent Mr. Parkinson! I am so glad he has found such a nice little wife and that he has settled comfortably down; he has certainly done a world of good there. Was it not strange, the legacy of the dear old New Hampshire to *me*, when he hardly seemed to know of my existence! Yet we did endure actual poverty, Helen, and for years. One can neither eat nor wear land, you know. That was merely a portion, the smallest fraction of the long, long, long suffering, even from the beginning of the war. I suppose my gladness is reaction after so much, so very much pain, Helen! I do not want to tire you, but let me write, please, if it is only to calm myself. I can write from this distance, although I know I could not talk with you, were we together, with the same freedom.

"It was terrible as death, our loss of Theodore,

then our breaking up from Charleston and moving West, the ending of the world to us! Death itself closes all, and this was the having to live on for years, alive yet in the utter wreck and dust of the grave! First, there was that gloomy old home of ours below Brownstown, old, at least, in the bearded and decaying live-oaks and the loneliness! The muddy river, the cypress swamp behind us, the dense forest, the very magnolias with their oppressive perfume, the heavy fog covering the world almost every morning like a shroud! We lived in miasma, in contrast with which this pure mountain air is like that of Paradise. Then we had so much trouble with the freedmen, at least until he took charge. Except when Mr. Anderson and yourself visited us, there was not a soul with whom we could associate, Mr. Parkinson excepted, — I mean with sympathy and pleasure, — and day after day for so very long. Next, and all the time, there was — you knew of it, Helen — my great — trouble! I was so young and ignorant when it began! If I had a story to tell your little Henry, dear, I would take him on my lap and do it in this way: Once on a time there was a certain young woman, — not a man as the books have it, — who carved out of pure, cold, beautiful white marble the statue

of a god. Her name was Pygmalia, not Pygmalion at all. She was very young, and very foolish, and very skillful with her chisel because she wanted a god to worship, and worked with all her ardent heart. It was a shame, but her statue seemed so beautiful that she loved it as if it was a living god. She found out afterward that the great God himself can and does make, and alone makes in his own time and way, the only objects that are really worthy of our love. But that was afterward, I say. I will add nothing about the incense, the tears and prayers, nor of what sort was the sacrifice she consumed before it. But, in this case, the statue never came to life, is merely marble still and forever. That is all! It was not the fault of the statue!

"And I will tell you here, Helen, a thing you never knew before. It happened when *he* and I were East — we were so sorry we could not run down to see you, dear, that trip! We were staying at a hotel in New York, we were in the parlor, just going out. Suddenly *they* came into the room, Mr. Clammeigh and his wife. Some power, with far-reaching hands, brought us all together in that way! The two men stood for the moment side by side, by His placing! It is not what I thought

of the unspeakable contrast. It was not what she, poor thing, thought of it, for she is also a woman, and they did not even pretend to marry from love. I would have cheerfully taken what the little bell-boy, handing them the key of their room at the moment, thought of the two men in contrast! Ague in comparison with health; yes, ague, pallid, feeble, shrinking, beside noblest manhood in supreme vigor of body and soul! He could no more help himself, Helen, than the coal on your hearth can keep from growing ashen when the strong sun shines full upon it! And I could not but be aware, too, of my husband's eyes, on her, on me!

"As it is only for your reading, Helen, I might tell you how people looked at us in the cars, in hotel parlors and dining room! It was at him, Helen, my man of men! Who could believe that even the Creator could work, at least in this world, such change in a human being, and that person remain the same! And change, through awful suffering, in me, Helen. My only beauty, the overflowing of my great gladness; if there was but more of my father in me to weigh down the mother I inherit!

"My mother! That was the next in our terrible changes. Before we left Charleston she had

abandoned almost everything to me, but she was never out of her mind, dear, if you ever feared so. It was years of intense, unintermitting affliction wearing upon a nature too sensitive at the beginning. You know the sainted dead are utterly withdrawn from earth, and us, although they love us still. Really, my mother died with Theodore! They neither read the Scriptures nor pray in heaven; she had heaven, if I may speak about such a matter, so steadily before her that she imagined herself done with all the *means* of approach thereto. Her death was a shock, and yet nothing could have seemed more natural, even beautiful, when we found her that morning not awakened out of her sleep, nor to awaken until another voice than ours shall break her slumber. I cannot speak of what followed upon that!

"Our home seemed afterward, as you may suppose, yet more like a cemetery, the great oaks closing nearer in upon us still with their drooping boughs and long gray moss. Oh, the sense of separation; the loneliness; the slow-footed hours; the sleepless nights; with the winds sighing among the trees, often the weeping clouds; the round of weary household affairs, day after day, and for what? I look back with amazement that I could

have endured it all and live. Yet I did endure it. Along with unspeakable despair there was unceasing hope, actual gladness. When I had time I sang at my instrument, sang, *sang!* I was in such continual practice that I was not conscious half the time of the keys as I sang, especially with earliest waking, and every evening before the lamps were lit; and very often they were not lit except for prayers and to go to bed. There was I far from all the world, no one left me but Aunty Washington our one slave, — surely Heaven allowed her to fall into that delusion in kindness to us, — and my father! I cannot write any more to-day.

"I ceased writing yesterday, Helen, and for more reasons than because the weary days in my 'moated grange' had come back to my mind so vividly! To-day I have sat for hours by my open desk at the window, trying to think when it all began; I mean about *him!* I have often tried, but I cannot remember. I recall, of course, a day at the old church, the first day I was there, when I saw him as I did the rest, merely a good-looking country youth. When they told me, laughingly, the effect I had on him, it amused rather than pleased me. Afterward the mention of the matter wearied me, I was tired of the nonsense! Then,

when you, Helen, and your husband spoke of it, I was deeply offended; you regarded me, I thought, as fallen indeed from former days!

"After that, without his seeking, he was much upon the place; came, in fact, and by a process as certain as summer, to have sole charge of our plantation, my father had become so feeble. Neither my mother nor my father ever dreamed, as you may well imagine, of such a thing; they fully believed — but I cannot speak of *that!* Should anything happen to them they relied entirely on that! I knew the deep and silent affection, devotion, rather, of the man, but not in any way from him. Had he said anything, done anything, I would have ended the matter instantly. I wonder if he knew it, or was it, as it was, the instinctive nobleness of his nature! If he had been a coward as well as a country youth, had been sentimental, maudlin, pining, I would have laughed at and despised him; but with all his simple manhood he was, Helen, so calm, so strong, had mastery of himself as well as our freed-people, so quiet yet complete! When it was urged upon him by my father, he took charge of the place only after my father had made him full and distinct promise that the plantation should be absolutely under his

control. He held and managed it with a hand so gentle and yet so strong, that no one ever thought even of making a suggestion. I knew that he loved me with all his soul, yet I knew he would not allow even me to interfere. I grew to respect him, Helen, as one does nature, so serene yet sovereign! And I had despised him because he was inferior — God help me! — to my marble god, marble so symmetrical, polished, beautiful!

"I had a last letter from *him* one day, Helen, and it happened it was this other that brought it from the office and handed it to me. I was at the front gate waiting, and with certainty, for a letter from Mr. Clammeigh, when he arrived with it from town. Part of the marble of the writer was that he had never prepared me for what was to come, or in the blind excess of my devotion I did not see it. The letter struck me like a dagger. I never yielded before, nor after; but it was following upon so long a strain, I was so entirely alone in the world, it was so sudden! I believe I fell. I was told he took me in his arms like a babe, his beard over my breast as he bore me into the house. Not the 'great house;' he had the singular thoughtfulness for my poor father, to carry me around it and into Aunty Washington's cabin.

Beside her and himself no soul has known of that until now; I could not tell even you, Helen, when you were with us.

"It chanced that the crop was all in. That very day he arranged with my father, as you know, that Harry Peters, our next neighbor, should manage our plantation as well as his own, which he had leased to him. It was the afternoon of the day following. I would not have spoken to my mother, had she been alive. I had gone to my piano, partly from force of habit, largely in very desperation. It was all over in an instant. He merely stood beside me and said, 'Miss Agnes! I have come to bid you good-by.'

"I did not cease playing, but looked up. He stood there with the innocent and steady eyes of a child in mine.

"'I am learning, you know,' he said quietly. 'I wanted to say that I know what I am as well as you. I want to say this, too: I love you, — I must love you forever, even if I am only what I am.'

"That was all. I did not cease playing for a moment; it must have been the last sounds he heard as he rode away. I was too stunned, then, to be capable of feeling; stunned by other things;

and I want to say this, and just here: I know nothing more of it all, Helen, than I do how the little seed begins to grow deep down in the earth. It was there long before I knew it, had life and growth and color before I was conscious it existed! I had your letters. I had his absence! I love, Helen dear, for the first time in my life! Before, it was half uneasy apprehension; now, I give my whole heart with certainty of my perfect safety in loving, I '*rest* in my love,' in the delicious words of old. But I hear the sound of hoofs, on the *gallop*, Helen! He is coming, and I prefer him to you, dear, a million times over! Good-by!"

So much for these two letters!

XXI.

The eagle's daring wing at last would flag,
Did it not reach and rest upon its crag?
Broad day would slay, did not its dying light
Lapse like a wave upon the shore of night.
And always peace, until the world shall cease,
Shall end in war, as war shall swoon in peace.
No calm but into storm doth rouse at last,
As storm doth sob into a calm its blast.
The soul, too, has its landing places, where
To halt and rest on its ascending stair.
Climb, soul, to heaven — thy final rest is there!

"It seemed to me after Mr. Anderson and yourself had left us," this next letter runs, "as if not so much weary weeks, months, years, but centuries rather, were rolling over my head. Our solemn home was like a great clock whose pendulum had ceased to swing. Time itself had stopped! The last relative left on earth to occupy my heart or my hand was my father. My great regret was that he left me so little to do for him. My mother's death had whitened him, so to speak, as with a sudden winter. Although more excit-

able, he grew more still and silent as he became more feeble. I will always have the sincerest regard for our overseer, Mr. Harry Peters, and his excellent little wife; they had given up their own home near by to live with us these days, and Mr. Peters overflowed as steadily as a mountain spring with his humor. It was only at times he could interest my father, at my request, in the affairs of our plantation, for he had long since turned over the freedmen to themselves and to Mr. Peters in disgust. For months before his death I never knew him to open a paper. Ever since I can remember he had read the "Charleston Mercury," and the extinction of that journal was to him the going out of the last orb of light in a sky of otherwise utter darkness! I so dreaded the stagnation of mind into which he might fall that I got Mr. Peters to tell him of evenings, as we sat together upon our front porch, the last items of political news. My dear father would sit and smoke, his beard grown so long and white, as Mr. Peters read, wholly unmoved and uninterested as to events in the Northern States, at Washington even. The Federal government and people were more foreign to him than China or Beloochistan. It was only when Mr. Peters recounted some fresh

injustice of the North, and its consummation at the South, that he would express, as of old, his deep indignation, Mr. Peters most heartily concurring with him; for my dear father was held, you know, Helen, in profound reverence and veneration by the entire county; they wanted to send him, at one election, to the Legislature, and thought that much the more of him for the loathing and contempt with which, under existing circumstances, he rejected the suggestion. And so he slept and waked, ate and conversed, confining himself gradually to the place, and at last to the house, so utterly alien to the present, so wholly wrapped up, almost even from me, in the past!

"I occupied myself as fully as possible in housekeeping, poor old Aunty Washington at my side all day, and *I* had no trouble with the freed women,—it all lies so much in putting yourself in their place, being patient and kind as if they were still your slaves. Then I would throw myself, as I have said, into music as if I was in training to be a prima donna; and I really have perfected myself, Helen, to a degree which has made our home out here the happier for it, if anything could make it happier. All at once I took to reading aloud to my father of mornings. Not fiction or

poetry. My own experiences made these seem pale and poor in comparison. I wanted to get into another world, as it were, so I read history. I happened upon the years of strife between Elizabeth and Mary Queen of Scots, I being a third and vastly wiser queen, forever coming between the other two to set them right. I do think it consoled my father a little as to the Federal government when I told him that, as the history showed, the race and the reformation seemed given over then of Heaven, and wholly, into the hands, as if it was a bonnet or a ball-dress, of two such squabbling milliners. The reading helped us both, helped my dear father in regard to the past, helped me in reference to the future. Besides, I would not tell you, but I will write it, and for your eyes, not your husband's, I constructed, all along as I read, a king for myself out of such material as the men of those days afforded, the courtiers and polished gentlemen of the time supplying me extremely little of it, I assure you. In fact, all my world had crumbled into chaos and was very slowly changing and reforming, as if during centuries on centuries, just then. God has finished it for me, at last, dear, and I know He pronounces it very good, for oh, Helen, Helen, it

is beyond my poor pen to say how much, how very much my new world is better than my old!

"I was occupied, too, with keeping in excellent health, for my father's sake and for the sake of my — future! Whenever I could I walked and walked. Several times during the week I would have Aunty Washington drive me to the post-office for your dear letters. As if I did not fully know that he knew every line he wrote so politely to you was intended for me, and, really, for me alone, Helen! And I slowly began to answer them, every one. Not that I ever actually wrote a syllable, as you and he well know; but, beginning with a cold line or two, I wrote at last sheets on sheets of replies, as I walked and rode and sat at my piano! It is the greatest pity they are not in real writing; I would love dearly to read them over to him now; would like so much to see how matters in regard to him began and grew and took the hues of life; for I do solemnly assure you, Helen, I have no more idea when it was nor how it was, than has either he or yourself!

"Every Sunday, through the rain even, I rode to church to hear Mr. Parkinson. Because I knew he would miss me so, but more especially to let him see that it could never be! I was so sorry

for him then. But, dear, how could I love him? He was part of the poetry and fiction from which I shrank. I was so weary of it all, if it were only that we had just come out of the terrible epic of the war and the siege of Charleston. What I thirsted for was, not wine, but simple water from the rock; I wanted to get down out of the air upon the earth again. What I craved was nature, reality, fact. I am so glad he has married that good little Molly Robinson. She is as like to a thousand other country girls as one blackberry is to all the rest, but she will be the very wife, true and strong and sensible, that he needs. And I am so glad that, instead of molding her as he imagines he will into his ideal, she will steadily and very sweetly make him forget that such an ideal ever had place in his imagination. How wonderfully wisely, dear, Heaven orders all such things; and not in the least as we arrange, because so much better! Speaking of Molly reminds me of Mr. Peters's odd little children. When Mr. Peters began to live with us I took such a fancy to them. They had been lost once in the 'bottom' for days, and I think their experience has changed them for life; they were so quiet, with such wondering and sorrowful eyes, the mice hardly more stealthy and mute. I was glad of it on account of my father.

"I can almost hear you say, 'You provoking thing, why do you not go on to tell about Mr. Evans?' Did you ever hear, Helen, about people who never opened a letter from their dearest friend for days on days, reserving it, tantalizing themselves with the future enjoyment of it? Be patient, dear, I want to tell you about Mr. Harry Peters. You know all the negroes ceased to laugh and sing over their work and when cooking and eating together almost all night in their cabins, as they used to do before freedom brought all the care and weight of themselves upon them. After Mr. Peters came he got them to laughing and singing again almost as much as before — he was so full of his fun, and his dear little wife of her responsive laughter, as much of an accomplishment in her as music, and far sweeter and more natural. He always had some funny kindness to show me. One day he brought me a tin bucket of — tadpoles! 'I wanted you to watch their legs come,' he explained. So I poured them into an old fruit-dish of glass, one of the few relics left by the cannon and shells of the siege.

"'Not a single sign of any legs as yet,' he said, 'only head and tail. Yet you wait, Miss Agnes, and as sure as you live the legs do come! Things

don't stay as they now are forever. Changes do happen! Without the seeking of those tadpoles God gives them what they need. If we could only float about and wait as they do!' There was more in the merry eyes and manner of the man than in his words! I thought of my own helplessness, it flashed upon me about *him*. By *him* I don't mean Mr. Peters. I laughed and laughed until Mrs. Peters and I cried for company. Now, worms browsing upon green leaves while their wings were forming within, to break forth some fine day into radiant butterflies, would have been more poetical. But one is so very familiar with that; the ugly tadpoles were more in keeping with my matters. I laughed every day as I leaned over them swimming around and around in their world of water in the bowl on one end of my piano, as the people in the other world lean over and look and, possibly, laugh at us. I even told my father about it, and he used to smoke his cigar and watch them himself in his silent way. It did us good, and their legs *did* come; I saw the whole transition! A ludicrous medicine, but it did us good!

"So did Aunty Washington. You know the freeing of the slaves was merely the success of irreligion to her, the overturning of the Bible. It

was like Philip of Spain, in my history, and the insurgent reformation. Aunty Washington would have had her race back into their normal and Heaven-ordained slavery if she could, was as bigoted as an inquisitor in her views of religion and heresy, her horror being at the 'fool talk' of the negro men, her double horror at the infatuation of the freed women. It was all I could do to keep anything like peace upon the plantation; she took an aversion to Mr. Parkinson, even, because he neglected in his preaching so fundamental a doctrine as that of slavery. Dr. Alexis Jones, the foppish young doctor, you remember, Helen, was liked by her because they agreed in the matter. It is hardly worth writing, but he argued from the researches of some Philadelphia Dr. Brown, I believe, that the blacks were not human; the hair being oval like that of animals, under the microscope, 'trichometer,' he called it, not round like that of the whites; but I would not mention this if it were not what followed from it, for she only knew he was pro-slavery and *would* have him as her physician! I had no idea of writing so much; it is the climate, the weather, my husband! And I have been much more eager to speak of him all this time than you can possibly have been to hear.

"How slowly my thoughts turned to him during all those long, long ages of time, as it seemed! He was away at college, in Europe, learning so much and so rapidly; and I was in *my* school, too, learning and unlearning even more. But, oh the suffering, Helen! Mamma had said to me, 'I used to think, Agnes, that even the infinite God would grow tired with inflicting so much pain upon his creatures during so many ages! But we will soon know the meaning, love!' Her ideas, however, were more general, Helen, than mine. I have to centre my heart upon some one person, and it helped me to submit, knowing the Father that held the rod. But when I came to know the Son that stooped by our side, and for our sake, to the same terrible blows, I could endure it better! Some awful necessity of pain when even the Eternal God stoops to suffer it, for us and with us! We will soon understand, it is eternity without pain, Helen, dear!

"Sometimes I would say, O man born of Mary, why not some little touch of womanly tenderness to me alone in the world! But, as I asked, it was like a mother's palm upon my head, Helen, the actual pressure of his peace! He was with me! I trembled sometimes in the hush and throbbing

sense of his actual presence! No fanaticism, dear, for I would bathe my face afterward and go out and feed the chickens, visit the cabins, do household things, with a positive happiness which could not have sprung merely from within me, no material there for it at all!

"You see how I shrink from telling about the end! I cannot speak of my growing affection; it is a mystery sacred even to myself! Now and then a half-word from the old postmaster about him. Plenty of letters concerning him from yourself — I say nothing of the letters of his you forwarded; I will love you, darling, as long as I live! — and Mr. Harry Peters was, in his way, the ally of the absent. I stood by him, I remember, one day, where the hands were digging yams; for I stayed in the house as little as possible, was over the whole plantation and in all weather, and took my father, if I could, with me; though time stood still, I must be in motion, or die! 'See this yam, Miss Agnes,' he said, holding up a potato which was half mud. 'Too muddy to touch. Now, see?' and he washed it in the bucket of water standing by, with its gourd, for the hands, and then held it up perfectly clean, as beautiful in its way as an orange. 'A man may be born,' Mr.

Peters went on to say, 'may live all his life in a cypress swamp, and be clean from the mud *himself* all the time. Father Hailstorm said last Sunday, we will be dug out of the dust one day clean as you please; on the last day I mean!' For matters changed after we came, Helen, and Harry is a 'shouting disciple' now; full and purified opportunity he has, these days, for his singular humor! And, by the bye, in the absence East of good Mr. Parkinson with his bride, it was Father Hailstorm who married us; only Harry Peters and his wife being present, for, with one soul beside, all Brown County must have been invited or mortally insulted at not being 'norated' to be present!

"I cannot hasten as I would; my mind came so slowly, in fact, to centre upon him; it *was* centuries, Helen! But it came, that day, that terrible yet happy day, at last! Aunty Washington's latest folly, poor soul, was her faith in Dr. Jones. We feared he was experimenting with her as he would have done with a dog. It was on his last visit to her cabin he persisted, I remember, — please have patience with me, Helen, — in telling me how his Dr. Brown of Philadelphia had written to him for specimens of the hair of all the Indians possible, to be put up in quills duly

labeled, and he laughed about entering into competition with Indians, themselves too actively engaged already in a collection of human hair! Nonsense, but it all comes back so vividly I must write it to have it out of the way. The negro, he urged, was but a species of beaver; he had the folly to tell me that Aunty Washington need not concern herself about her soul; 'Has none,' he said, 'any more,' he added as he rode off, 'than any of the rest of us!' Pardon my recording such folly.

"She died before he was out of sight, died, Helen, as true to us and to her old-fashioned religion as any martyr of us all. I was worn out the next day, for she could not endure one of the 'colored ladies,' as she called them, near her when she could help it. I had been beside the dead all night. It was the gloomiest of days. It seemed as if the live-oaks had come yet closer about the house, to droop their mournful moss like crape over the dead. The air itself had halted, as it were. The river ran sullenly through the heavy silence. Except one or two very old negroes tending young turkeys in the yard, all the people were in the field, for Mrs. Peters had gone to her own house with her children for a few hours, after

helping me with the dead. It was the deliberate doing of God, the arrival of such an hour, Helen! I had reached at that moment, the deepest point of descent into the dark valley. My soul, partly in consequence of my reading about Queen Elizabeth, — the history did me that good, — had reached its strongest strength as by pressure of supreme strain. But the body was failing! It seemed to me I could not bear a straw's weight more and live.

"It is as if it took place yesterday. About four o'clock that dreadful afternoon I heard a noise! When I heard the front gate open and fall to in the dead silence, I knew it was not my father, for he had ridden to town, for the first time in months, in vague idea of seeing Dr. Jones, though what for he could have told no more than myself! And Dr. Jones need not have fled the county, as he afterward did! Every one knew how very heavy, tremulous, feeble my father had grown! God forbid I should ever see that silly young physician again, but I do not think my father could have lasted, if he had not met him, much longer.

"I was sewing at a white band for poor Aunty Washington, not weeping, too exhausted for that,

not thinking, or feeling even ; in the condition, I suppose, of the dying during the one moment before entering upon eternal life. The front gate fell to upon its latch and all my soul returned again as from its lowest ebb ! I knew who it was ! I was calm, far more so than I am while I write, Helen. In one moment ! And during that moment the centuries had rolled away ! Were gone forever and ever ! I rose and went out upon the porch. I knew him and did not know him as he stood there. On the instant of seeing him it was with me as when you look at an object in a stereoscope, first a blurring as by the slow blending of the two objects which are the same into one. One ! It was but a moment, Helen, and the rude countryman of the centuries ago is blended into and forever lost in the noble Christian gentleman of to-day ! But an instant, and we were to each other, and forever, as if we had known and loved each other all our lives. Natural ! It was so perfectly *natural !* As it will be at death to us and our friends in heaven forever, after the first moment or two. Yes, natural as trees and sky and every other daily matter ; not rapture, nor astonishment, simple, sweet nature, and matter of course !

"I acknowledge I do not know how or when we would have first met had it not been as it was. He stood there, his hat in his hand, calm, strong, confident, like some royal duke; don't smile, Helen! In that one first glance I saw all he had gained during absence; observed, even, the slight band of red upon his brow from the pressure there of his hat.

"'Please do not be alarmed,' he said, 'but your father needs your care;' his manner expressed all the rest. You have heard it over and over again, Helen. My father had met Dr. Alexis Jones on the road coming to our house. I do not know that he said a syllable to exasperate my father when they met. I do not know what my father may have said to him, for he was greatly angered at his treatment of our poor servant; and then he was so shaken and feeble! He had fallen from his horse. Dr. Jones was off his horse too, trying with terrified face, his lancet in his hand, to lift the poor body from the mire, when *he* rode up from his long absence! It was near the door of Harry Peters' house, and now, there at our gate, was Mr. Peters' ambulance, and laid along in it and covered with a blanket, was my last relative on earth — and dead!

"It relieves me to write it, Helen! I was glad when Mr. Peters had gone home to bring his wife back, and he and I were left alone upon one side and the other of the lounge on which they had laid my father. I was not afraid, with him there, to uncover after a while the face of my, and his, dead. You know, Helen, the noble bearing of my father, and now his whole aspect was nobler than ever; the set face of a king throned forever far above the wreck of South, or North, or the world, or — of himself! You know, dear, I never *speak* upon such matters to any one, but I can write it; could it have been ordered better? The terrible preparation in both of us, my husband and myself, going before; the pain, in my case who needed it most, continued to the last degree I could endure and exist, and then? That when, in my father, my last hope was gone, with my dead father he should come! That, of all the world, he only should be there to aid me with my poor father as with the hands of a son! In the same act, Helen, he had brought me the last of all I had loved most dearly, and the first of all I now love, love, oh how much more! I suppose it will be that way at death; when I let go hereafter my husband's hand in dying, it will be to clasp, as I do so, the hands

again of father, mother, Theodore, in heaven! Is it morbid, my talking so much of death and the other life? You know we *do* die as well as live, and that there *is* another world as well as this! and I dare say I will soon grow out of this period of my life, and become worldly enough.

"I spoke of heaven! I tremble at my happiness, Helen. He has come as I write, to the gate, riding his horse, leading mine saddled for our afternoon ride to the post-office over the prairie. I will seal this without reading it and take it with me, for we gallop together every afternoon we can through the pure, bracing wind, to the next town for our mail, the very brooks we leap our horses over sparkling with secrets of the silver and gold below the soil. How my blood bounds, and, he says so, my cheeks glow, and my eyes brighten! It is not fever but pure health, even if I laugh so much, have so much of nothing to say! Oh, beautiful world! Oh, beautiful God! My eyes dim with happy tears; God has been, in and by all my pain, too, so very, very good! I have called to him to wait only a moment while I beg of you, Helen, to look through my glad eyes at the glorious landscape in this our new home. Brown plain, glittering river, snow-capped moun-

tains in the distance, atmosphere pure and brilliant and laughing with life. The people, too, are free and strong and impulsive as I am. But what do I care for anything else? There he sits upon his horse at the gate, Helen, in the glory of his pure and magnificent manhood, modest as a woman, wise and good and true! He is going into hard work. It may be at railroads, or mines, or schools, or politics if necessary, — pure and strong enough even for that! — whatever is best. For it is Eden, a new world; for a new man and a new woman! We are very happy! I know that it is as natural to our veins, after our long winter, as is its exuberant life, when spring comes to oak and to rose-bush, even if other winters are sure to come hereafter! Strange as it seems to say, part of the solid ground of my happiness is in knowing so well how he will endure calamity when it comes, as in some form it must come to us, too, in the future as in the past; endure it as the cliff of rock endures the sea! No, rather as a child, grown strong enough in virtue of all that has gone before, endures the dealing of one whom he has thoroughly found out to be his personal friend. And next to that other, Helen, I love this man! Love him, Helen, love him, *love* him! If I could

only tell you, not merely write you, *how* I love him! I love, Helen darling, as I will love my Saviour and him in heaven eternally! Because by these two I have been made all I am. By the one infinitely more than by the other, but the *kind* of influence the same in both — the almighty influence of love! And he believes the same of me, as if my poor hands had ever lifted him from such a cypress swamp as his hands have lifted me! I respect and esteem your admirable husband, my dear; but mine is a grand duke, an emperor" —

And here I do sincerely think it is time to stop copying her letters! My nerve fails, lest Helen should suddenly return and should arrest it all. It is very hazardous! Women like to have their husbands do things without consulting them, at least as variety to steady obedience; and a man must assert himself occasionally, beard some sort of giant, storm some species of battery, if only to reassert his ante-marital manhood. My pen, however, is hastened by the fear that Helen may have some feminine presentiment of what is being done in her absence, and hurry back. Allow me, then, to resume and complete my task lest such a catastrophe to this narrative should befall. The entire venture is out of my line of business al-

together. I am not as concerned about the opinions of the reader as I am in reference to what these two ladies will think of my mode of closing this simple narrative. Opinion of the reader? I make no pretense as to my way of relating matters, and what to anybody is the opinion people have of facts? You might as well speak of their opinions about iron or coal or land. Which reminds me to state that I intend to make it convenient to be at our company's office on Wall Street about the time the final chapters of this narrative are due in Charleston! I am safe, for the present, from the friends in California; unless, indeed, as is sure to be the case sooner or later, I fear, we have him in Congress; in which case there will be one man, at least, stanch as oak in Washington even!

Few readers of this narrative, to close with due solemnity, but must have heard something of the circumstances therein recorded, which got into certain papers both South and North. If we will wait awhile, unless I greatly mistake, we will all of us hear plenty more about him. About him, I mean, and I inscribe it here in no sense as an epitaph, whom I designate in these pages as — MOSE EVANS.

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